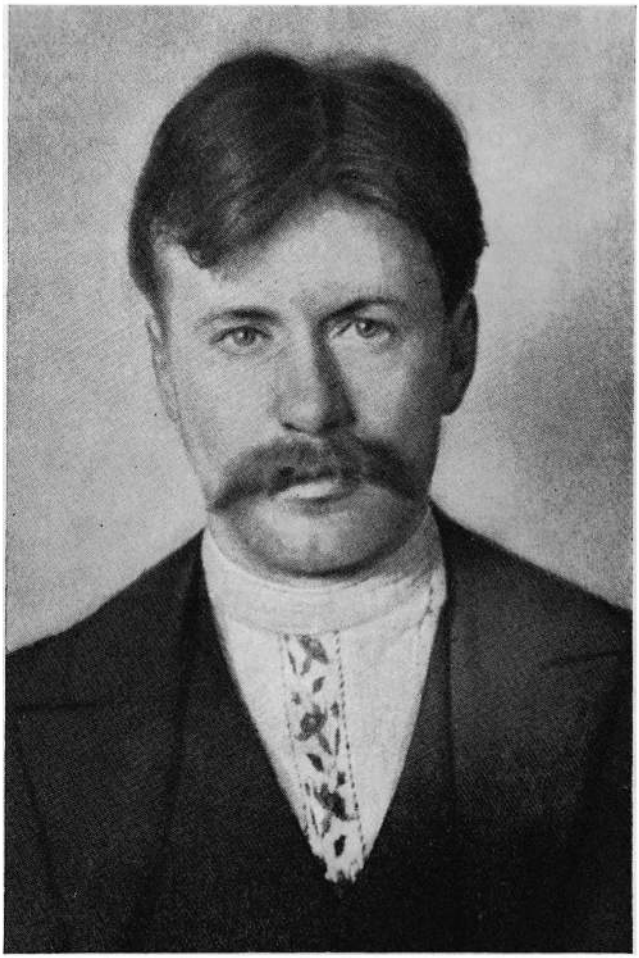
Recollections of

IVAN VASILYEVICH BABUSHKIN



I. V. BABUSHKIN

Recollections

OF

IVAN VASILYEVICH BABUSHKIN

(1893–1900)

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ВОСПОМИНАНИЯ
ИВАНА ВАСИЛЬЕВИЧА БАБУШКИНА

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IVAN VASILYEVICH BABUSHKIN

(Short Biographical Note)

Among the glorious fighters for the building of the Bolshevik Party, for the overthrow of the autocracy and the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia, an eminent place is held by Ivan Vasilyevich Babushkin. Lenin called Babushkin "a hero of the people," who devoted himself completely to the struggle for the emancipation of the working class.

Estimating Babushkin's service to the revolution, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin wrote:

"Without such as Babushkin the Russian people would remain forever a nation of slaves, a nation of serfs. With such as Babushkin, the Russian people will win for themselves complete freedom from all exploitation." (*Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 16, p. 334.)

Ivan Babushkin was born on January 15, 1873, into the family of a poor peasant in the village of Ledengskoye, the Vologda province. His father died while Babushkin was a boy, and his childhood was one of poverty and hunger. The ten-year-old lad was farmed out to a small shopkeeper who subjected him to pitiless ill-treatment and brutal exploitation.

When he turned fourteen, Babushkin began work in the Kronstadt Torpedo Works where he first learned about

the struggle of the workers for a better life. After a four-year apprenticeship Babushkin got employment in the Semyannikov works in Petersburg (now the Lenin works).

An upsurge of the Russian working-class movement took place in the nineties of last century. In these years the first Social-Democratic circles were created in which advanced workers participated.

Babushkin learnt about the existence of these workers' political circles and tried to get into one. By good fortune he became a student in the Marxist study circle led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

The meeting with Lenin determined Babushkin's whole future life and work. Lenin valued very highly the energy, outstanding ability, and the selfless devotion of Babushkin to the cause of the revolution. Under the direct guidance of Lenin, Babushkin became a professional revolutionary, and devoted all his energies to the revolutionary struggle of the Russian working class. In 1895 he participated actively in the work of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, which had been established by Lenin.

Following the arrest of Lenin and other members of the League of Struggle, Babushkin, who was still at large, strained every nerve in order that the League of Struggle might not cease its activities.

During this time he wrote and published a popular political leaflet "What Are Socialists and State Criminals?", in which he explained to the workers the aspirations and aims of the Russian Social-Democrats.

He continued his revolutionary work in the Nevsky Gate district among the workers in the Semyannikov, Alexander and Glass factories, organizing study circles and libraries.

At the beginning of 1896 Babushkin was arrested in connection with the case against the League of Struggle.

He was kept for thirteen months in solitary confinement in the remand prison. The tsarist satraps could not break his will to struggle for the right cause; he was a revolutionary of the Lenin school.

Babushkin used the compulsory isolation from practical revolutionary activity to study Marxism.

In February, 1897, Babushkin was released from prison and deported to Yekaterinoslav (Dniepropetrovsk). Securing employment in a factory he made contact very quickly with the local revolutionary organization, and he threw himself into its work with all the passion of a proletarian revolutionary.

By the efforts of Babushkin and other revolutionaries the Yekaterinoslav League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was created in 1897. Babushkin became one of its most active members.

At the beginning of 1898 the Yekaterinoslav League of Struggle issued eight leaflets addressed to the workers of the town. Each leaflet exposed the arbitrary rule and violence which then reigned over all Russia, showed the workers the path to freedom and called on them to take up active revolutionary struggle.

In Yekaterinoslav Babushkin organized an illegal printing-press for printing forbidden revolutionary literature.

Babushkin's three years' work in Yekaterinoslav bore fruit: the revolutionary workers of the town rallied around the Yekaterinoslav Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

In spite of the most careful attention to the rules of underground work, the police got to know of the revolutionary activity of the members of the Yekaterinoslav Committee; mass arrests of Social-Democrats took place in 1900.

Babushkin managed to evade arrest but he had to leave Yekaterinoslav.

Lenin, who at that time had just returned from exile in Siberia, set to work to launch an all-Russian newspaper for revolutionary Marxists—*Iskra*—with the aim of linking up all the separate Marxist organizations in preparation for the formation of a revolutionary Marxist party in Russia.

Lenin considered it expedient to publish the paper abroad to avoid its possible suppression by the police. But the paper had to maintain the closest links with the Social-Democratic organizations in Russia. Lenin's plan was warmly approved by the Russian revolutionary Marxists.

Ivan Babushkin actively participated in the creation of the Lenin *Iskra*. In the summer of 1900, with the assistance of Maria Ulyanova (Lenin's sister), he established contact with Lenin and became one of the first agents of the *Iskra* and a regular correspondent.

In the fierce battle to build the Marxist party Lenin placed implicit confidence in Babushkin and the latter justified Lenin's opinion of him. He was one of those workers who helped to connect the *Iskra* with the Social-Democratic groups in Russia.

Babushkin sent hundreds of letters, written by workers of Shuya, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Orekhovo-Zuyevo and other towns, to the Lenin *Iskra*.

"As long as Ivan Vasilyevich remains at liberty," wrote Lenin, "the *Iskra* shall not suffer from a shortage of purely worker correspondence."

To escape the attention of the tsarist police Babushkin had constantly to change his place of residence. He carried out revolutionary activity in Smolensk, Polotsk, Pokrov, Moscow, Orekhovo-Zuyevo and Ivanovo-Voznesensk. No matter where he went he broadened and strengthened the contact between the *Iskra* and the working masses.

At this time, Lenin requested Babushkin to write a popular pamphlet "To the Defence of the Workers of

Ivanovo-Voznesensk"; it was published illegally and widely circulated among the workers in the industrial centres.

Acting on Lenin's instructions, Babushkin, in collaboration with N. E. Bauman, did tremendous organizational work in uniting the Moscow Social-Democrats around the *Iskra*.

Babushkin was again arrested towards the end of 1901, but, in the summer of 1902, he succeeded in escaping from prison, and went abroad, to London, where the editorial board of the *Iskra* was then.

In London, Babushkin met Lenin, who outlined his plans for the future work of the *Iskra* organizations towards the building of a Marxist party. "We exchanged views on many matters there; we discussed many questions together," wrote Lenin about his meetings with Babushkin.

Babushkin wanted to return to Russia as soon as possible in order to play an active part in the realization of Lenin's plans to build a revolutionary Marxist party. Only with difficulty did Lenin manage to persuade Babushkin to remain in London long enough to write about his life and revolutionary work.

Lenin considered that such a pamphlet would be of the greatest value for young workers who would learn from it how every thinking worker should live and conduct himself.

The *Recollections* cover the period from 1893 to 1900. They were published for the first time after the October Socialist Revolution.

When he had written the *Recollections* Babushkin went on a special mission from Lenin to Petersburg, where the struggle of the revolutionary Marxists with the Economists had become particularly sharp.

In Petersburg Babushkin became involved immediately in the work of the local *Iskra* organization, taking up

a consistent Leninist position on all the questions of revolutionary action.

Lenin praised Babushkin's work when on January 16, 1903, he wrote:

"We greet the energetic activity of Novitskaya (Babushkin assumed a woman's name.—*Ed.*) and ask once more that she continue in the same militant spirit, without the slightest vacillation." (*Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 34, p. 112.)

Lenin had great confidence in Babushkin. "As long as you have Bogdan (another pseudonym of Babushkin's. —*Ed.*) you cannot complain of lack of forces." (*Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 34, p. 111.)

However, Babushkin did not work very long in Petersburg. He was arrested, and after a long period of solitary confinement, was sent to exile in far-away Yakutsk.

Exiled to the far North, to Verkholensk, and divorced from Party life, from his relatives and comrades, Babushkin, despite all trials and adversities, never lost heart, nor his firm belief in the triumph of the cause for which he had fought all his life.

During his exile Babushkin organized study circles and acquired much knowledge himself, in preparation for the struggles ahead.

In 1905 the revolution broke out. The Russian working class went into battle against the tsarist autocracy. Babushkin was at the head of the revolutionary movement in Irkutsk. As a member of the Irkutsk Party Committee he carried on an irreconcilable struggle against the Mensheviks and worked for the preparation of the masses for armed uprising against tsarism.

Following the defeat of the December 1905 armed uprising in Moscow, came the turning point and gradual recession of the revolution. The working class retreated in fierce battles. The workers put up a stubborn resistance in Chita, where the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers'

and Cossacks' Deputies, created and led by the Bolsheviks, functioned as the organ of the revolutionary power.

In Irkutsk there was a shortage of arms. With the aim of organizing a supply of arms for the Irkutsk workers Babushkin and a group of his comrades left the town towards the end of December, 1905, to go to Chita.

On the return journey Babushkin and five of his comrades were captured by a punitive expedition sent by the tsar to Siberia to crush the revolutionary movement.

On January 31, 1906, on the Mysovaya railway station, all six, without trial or interrogation, were mercilessly shot on the brink of a hastily dug grave.

They died like heroes, refusing to answer the questions of the tsarist butchers who never discovered the names of their victims.

The heroic life of Babushkin is a source of inspiration for all those who are fighting to liberate mankind from tyranny and oppression and to build a new socialist world.

V. I. LENIN

IVAN VASILYEVICH BABUSHKIN

(Obituary)

We live in damnable times when it is possible for a prominent Party worker, the pride of the Party, a comrade who selflessly devoted his whole life to the cause of the working class, to disappear without trace. And for years those nearest to him, such as his wife and mother, and his closest friends, do not know what has happened to him: whether he is languishing somewhere in penal servitude, or has perished in some prison, or has died a hero's death in battle with the enemy. This is what happened to Ivan Vasilyevich; he was shot by Rennenkampf. We learned about his death only a short time ago.

The name of Ivan Vasilyevich is near and dear to more than one Social-Democrat. All who knew him liked and respected him for his energy, his modesty, his deep, tried and tested faith in the revolution and his ardent devotion to the cause.

In 1895, this Petersburg worker, with a group of other comrades in the Nevsky Gate district, worked energetically among the workers of the Semyannikov, Alexander and Glass factories, organizing study circles and libra-

ries, while he himself gave every spare moment to intensive study.

All his thoughts were intent on extending the work. He took an active part in writing the *first agitational leaflet* issued in Petersburg in the autumn of 1894. It was addressed to the Semyannikov workers and was distributed by him personally.

When The League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was formed in Petersburg he became one of its most active members and worked in it right up till his arrest.

The idea of launching a political newspaper to be published abroad, which would help to unite and strengthen the Social-Democratic Party, was discussed between his old Petersburg comrades—the founders of the *Iskra*—and him, and received his most warm support.

As long as Ivan Babushkin remains at liberty, the *Iskra* will never suffer from a shortage of purely worker correspondence. Look through the first twenty issues of the *Iskra*—at the correspondence from Shuya, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Orekhovo-Zuyevo and other localities of central Russia; almost all of it passed through the hands of Ivan Vasilyevich, striving to maintain the closest possible contact between the *Iskra* and the workers.

Ivan Vasilyevich was a very diligent correspondent of the *Iskra* himself, and its most ardent supporter.

From the central district Babushkin moved to the south, to Yekaterinoslav, where he was arrested and imprisoned in Alexandrovsk. He escaped from Alexandrovsk, together with another comrade, by sawing through the bars of a window.

Not knowing a single foreign language, he made his way to London, where the *Iskra* was being published. We exchanged views on many matters there; we discussed many questions together.

But Ivan Vasilyevich could not attend the Second Congress of the Party—prison and exile kept him out of the way for a long time. The rising tide of revolution brought forward new workers, new Party leaders, but Babushkin lived at that time in the far North, in Verkholensk, divorced from Party life.

He lost no time, however; he studied, prepared for the struggle, and taught the workers who were with him in exile, endeavouring to train them as class-conscious Social-Democrats and Bolsheviks. In 1905 came the amnesty and Babushkin started for Russia. But the struggle was boiling up in Siberia too at that time, and people like Babushkin were needed there. He joined the Irkutsk Committee and gave himself up entirely to work.

He had to speak at meetings, carry out Social-Democratic agitation and organize the uprising. When Babushkin and five other comrades—their names have not reached us yet—left Chita with a large consignment of arms in a separate carriage, the train was overtaken by a punitive expedition under Rennenkampf and all six, without any trial, were shot on the brink of a hastily dug common grave. They died like heroes. Soldiers who saw the shooting, and railwaymen from the same train, told us about it.

Babushkin fell a victim to the brutal reprisal by the tsar's hangmen, but dying, he knew that the cause for which he had given his whole life would never die, that it would be carried on by tens and hundreds of thousands, by millions of other fighters; that other comrades from the working class would give their lives, that they would fight on till they won.

* * *

There are people who have invented, and who spread the fable that the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is a Party of "intellectuals"; that the workers are cut off from the Party; that the Russian workers are Social-Democrats without Social-Democracy; that this was true particularly before the revolution and in a large measure during the revolution.

The Liberals spread this lie out of hatred for that revolutionary struggle of the masses in 1905 which was led by the R.S.D.L.P., and some of the Socialists borrow this lying theory out of foolishness or thoughtlessness.

The biography of Ivan Vasilyevich Babushkin, the ten years of Social-Democratic activity of this *Iskra* worker, is a vivid refutation of this Liberal lie.

I. V. Babushkin is one of those advanced workers who, *ten years* before the revolution, began to create a *labour* Social-Democratic party. Without the tireless, heroically persistent work of *such* advanced workers among the proletarian masses the R.S.D.L.P. would not have lasted ten months, let alone ten years.

Only thanks to the activity of *such* advanced workers, only thanks to their support, did the R.S.D.L.P. grow by 1905 into a party which was *indestructibly united* with the proletariat in the great October and December days, and which preserved this connection in the person of the *worker deputies*, not only in the Second, but in the Third, the Black-Hundred, Duma.

The Liberals (the Cadets) want to make the President of the First Duma, S. A. Muromtsev, who died recently, a national hero. We Social-Democrats must use every opportunity to express contempt and hatred for the tsarist government, which persecuted even such moderate and inoffensive officials as Muromtsev.

Muromtsev was just a Liberal official. He was not even a democrat. He was afraid of the revolutionary

struggle of the masses. He waited to see Russia set free, not by means of such a struggle, but by the goodwill of the tsarist autocracy, by an *agreement* with this foul and merciless enemy of the Russian people. It is ludicrous to think of such men as popular heroes of the Russian revolution.

But there are such heroes of the people. These are people like Babushkin, who, not one year or two, but a whole decade before the revolution, dedicated themselves fully to the struggle for the emancipation of the working class.

These are the people who did not waste their energies in fruitless, terrorist adventures as individuals, but worked stubbornly and without flinching among the proletarian masses, helping to develop *their* knowledge, *their* political consciousness, *their* organization, *their* revolutionary initiative.

These are the people who led the armed mass struggle against the tsarist autocracy, at the moment of crisis, when the revolution broke out, when millions upon millions started to move. Everything that was wrested from the tsarist autocracy was won *exclusively* by the struggle of the masses led by such people as Babushkin.

Without such as Babushkin the Russian people would remain forever a nation of slaves, a nation of serfs. With such as Babushkin the Russian people will win complete freedom from all exploitation.

Five years have passed since the December Uprising of 1905. Let us celebrate this anniversary thinking of those advanced workers who fell in battle with the enemy. We ask our comrade workers to write and send to us recollections of the struggles of those days, with additional information regarding Babushkin and other Social-Democratic workers who fell in the uprising of 1905.

We intend to publish a pamphlet with the biographies of these workers. Such a pamphlet will be the best answer to all the doubters and deprecators of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Such a pamphlet will be the best guide to our young workers, who will learn from it how every thinking worker should live and conduct himself.

Workers' Gazette, No. 2, December 18 (31), 1910.
Reprinted from the text in the *Works of* V. I. Lenin, 4th Russ, ed., Vol. 16, pp. 331-334.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

IVAN VASILYEVICH BABUSHKIN

I

These recollections were first told to me by a very close friend, so close in fact, that, to use a Russian expression, we lived "soul to soul," indeed more than that, it was as if we had but one soul between us—at least that's how our friendship affected me personally.

He related all he could remember regarding his transformation from a mere "numeral," a young man with no definite views or convictions, into a Socialist, deeply imbued with socialist principles and free of all the old prejudices.

Inspired by the conception of socialism he felt the urge to put his beliefs into practice immediately, and to convert those around him, his friends and comrades and relatives. He explained where and in what conditions he tried to put his faith in socialism into everyday life, the personalities he met, how they worked, the awakening of their ideas and how these ideas developed, broadened out and deepened, moulding the outlook of mature, conscious workers.

"These are just my own impressions of places I've been to. They are neither extensive nor complete. In fact, I've not lived or even been in very many places."

And now, as I said, I'll pass on my friend's recollections, beginning, as they say, from the beginning.

I was born into a peasant family and lived in the countryside until I was fourteen years old. Our village, which was lost in the woods, was far from the big towns. I was fourteen before I saw a real town for the first time; then I moved from one town to another until finally I came to Petersburg, and then to still another town where I was forced to live for a while.

Yet, all the years I spent in my native village, living the life of a ploughman, are obscure and forgotten, a blank spot in my life. I was not fated to return to village life, nor to dig again the plot of land of which I'm still the legal owner.

My life turned out differently. It has been a town life, life in the capital, a factory life, the life of a skilled worker—this has been my life, I know it and understand it, and it is near and dear to me. The worker's family is my family, I am at home in it; I am never disturbed nor surprised at anything that happens there.

"Everything as it is, so it must be and will be." That's what I thought before I really began to live, when I was vegetating, indifferent to life around me, having only one interest—to earn my miserable wage, my head full of religious prejudices and the crazy idea of getting rich and having a good time.

A small town, about one and a half square miles, surrounded by water. On one bank were the soldiers' barracks, on the other were the government shipyards and the port with its various workshops. In the middle of the town an artificial canal circled the government warehouses.

No matter where you turned everything smelt of government, the military and the war department. For this was Kronstadt.

It was here in Kronstadt that I began work in the Kronstadt Port Torpedo Works when I was fourteen years of age, earning in the first three years twenty kopeks a day, or four to five rubles a month. I had to fend for myself on this wage, having no one to whom I could turn for help.

I worked here for six years, but never once in that time did I see a leaflet or an illegal pamphlet, and it was obvious that none of the other workers had ever read one either. All sorts of discussions went on, most of the time in the one place. Everything was discussed, including the "government criminals."

It is difficult to convey the interest these talks had for me and how hard it was then to understand the sense of them, in spite of the fact that the people concerned spoke quite openly, being neither afraid of spies or provocateurs, nor of someone reporting them to the police.

No "crimes against the social order" were committed, there were only vague reminiscences, usually based on second-hand reports and exaggerated tales passed on as something out of the ordinary, strictly secret, fraught with danger, and so all the more interesting and absorbing.

There was always considerable tension among the listeners when such stories were being told, the unusual silence round the speaker was disturbed only by the monotonous noise of the driving-belt with its peculiar clatter, as it slipped round the pulley wheels, and through the half-open door of the turning shop came the hollow rumble of hundreds of workers at their machines.

It would have been just too bad if a gendarme, or someone of that crew, had turned up unexpectedly for some reason; it would have been a fearful shock for those innocent listeners. The surprise appearance of someone from the management would have brought the sweat out on their brows—their nerves were so strained.

Quite often the speaker would get carried away with himself while telling a convincing story about a plot, or of someone who tried to dig his way out of prison, or of an attempt on somebody's life, mentioning the name of one of the persons who had been hanged afterwards just outside the town.

I cannot recall the names spoken of in those stories, but the discussions made a lasting impression on me. Besides, I couldn't understand why they had been executed or what they had done.

The more mature and sensible workers gave us to understand that the men had been reading books secretly, books which were forbidden; that they were not really bad people, but defended the interests of the workers. However, others explained that in claiming to defend the working people the criminals were simply being cunning.

I remember hearing about an officer who was brought to the scaffold, and how bravely he bore himself. Then there was talk about a young fitter who had actually worked in the same shop. We were told how he used to go out of town on Sundays to read illegal newspapers, and how later on the police kept a close watch on him. Some doubtful characters began to hang around the shop to keep an eye on him—one dressed as a priest, another posing as a public official, and a third disguised as a muzhik. The young fitter had a good idea of the identity of these individuals; their persecution resulted in him having a mental break-down.

This is more or less how I lived and worked until my eighteenth birthday, when by local custom I was considered an adult; my apprenticeship was over and I became a journeyman in accordance with the established trade rights in the shop. As a fully grown man very soon I was given independent and fairly complicated work. I wasn't overjoyed with this because the starting

wage for skilled workers was very low. I began to think about finding another job in a different factory. This wasn't easy unless someone recommended you, so until that came about I went on working where I was.

Finally it looked as if my hopes would be realized and I got ready to take a job in the Baltic works in Petersburg. However, things moved very slowly, in spite of the many promises I received and the refreshments I had to stand, none of which brought the results I had anticipated.

About this time I had the interesting experience of meeting a Petersburg worker who was a lodger in the same flat where I had lived for more than two years. Through him I came to understand the Petersburg workers as very good craftsmen, and that, although they were hard drinkers, they could, by working day and night, earn up to eighty and a hundred rubles a month. With my eighteen rubles a month this seemed to be an ideal which I should try to attain.

As it turned out, I attracted the attention of the Petersburg worker and soon we became firm friends; there remained with me for a long time afterwards only the best memories of this worker, who was an atheist and a Socialist. True, he himself was not well-read and could give me little enlightenment, but I did absorb some of his instinctive hatred and protest against the capitalists and the minor parasites in the factory.

Working the whole week, practically day and night, he was so exhausted by Saturday that a few drinks made him intoxicated. Then we would go off together somewhere away from people, and this worn-out man, his tongue loosened by vodka, would begin gradually to reveal the truth and the bitterness which filled his whole being.

"Ivan," he said to me, "can you get me some of the poison the boss uses to etch the steel?"

"What do you want it for?"

"It's like this. I have a wife and kids in the village, and a house; I'm thinking of going home. I want to take some of that stuff with me, first, to poison the cattle of the priest and the village kulak, and then see what else can be done with them. I tell you that the priests are a bad lot. Believe me, a drunk man, when I say: there is no god, it's all a fraud to deceive the people. We should cut the foremen's throats every time we get a chance and the village priests and kulaks should be killed off, because of the kind of life they give us."

He spoke to me often in this strain.

"Just think, why do we need these blood-sucking foremen? All they do is to rob us of our bonus, drink our money and sit on our necks." Most of all he fulminated against the whole pack of managers, and from his cursing I acquired a good bit of his abhorrence of oppression. However, he was incapable of correctly developing the conceptions of atheism and socialism, and because of this I was not seriously affected by his views, nor did I feel the same deep bitterness. He really detested injustice and obviously tried to drown his sorrows in vodka and beer. Soon I learned that he had died.

Finally my wish became true; I started to work in a Petersburg factory on piece-work. There were eighteen in our squad, and as a new hand I was obliged to treat the whole squad to a little celebration—with refreshments. I had no money, but the squad leader got on credit four pints of vodka, five herrings, some bread and several bottles of beer for which I was to pay afterwards. Besides my own squad, four or five men from other squads and one or two individuals who were connected with the work of our squad, joined in the treat to congratulate me on my new job.

We all retired to a yard beyond the gates, where we formed a circle in the middle of which were the bottles

and the food. Of course there was not even the pretence of elementary comfort; one took the vodka, another the bread, and a third the herrings; the food was cut up and passed round by hand. The squad leader held a glass filled with spirits and in a pleasant way wished me good luck in my job—so the celebration began.

It was all over in about ten minutes; I went away a full-fledged member of the squad that I had just entertained at the cost of two and a half rubles. Although the whole affair is nothing to boast about I didn't feel any particular dislike to it. At such treats people feel more friendly to one another, they want to talk about their common problems and the burning issues of the day.

At these events the foremen are often taught a lesson for their long tongue and sharp practices. Traces of these lessons sometimes could be seen a week or two later under a foreman's eyes. Of course, there were cases when foremen declined the invitation to attend the treats out of concern for their health.

Well, now I'm working in the factory of S. (Semyannikov.—*Ed.*) in a piece-work squad, where the wages depend not on separate individuals, but on the collective work of the squad. Working in such a squad calls for skill, tenacity and the ability to stand on your own feet. Without these qualities you'll have no chance and, as they say, they'll get shut of you from the squad and you'll be the loser, because the squad is paid a percentage on each ruble earned—as much as fifty to sixty kopeks—outside the squad there is no bonus.

While working in Kronstadt I never felt my job to be a burden and seldom got tired as a result of it. Working for a daily wage a man didn't get over-tired nor feel he was wearing himself out quickly. Piece-work was quite a different matter; on this work a man had no time to be sorry for himself, he forgot all about his health and never

looked to the future, not even worrying that such toil could cut his life short.

No! He strains every nerve to push the work forward, with the sweat dripping from him, hardly stopping to wipe it off as it falls on the job he is doing, making him grumble and curse. With an impatient gesture he wipes his brow with his sleeve; then again to work, urgently, impatiently—and all for what—to get an extra kopek on the ruble.

It is still worse in a squad where each man follows the other. It is specially hard where several workers are doing exactly the same type of job. Here everyone is trying to set the pace as fast as possible. Such conditions of work have a positively bad effect on the workers' health.[1] There are always one or two more dexterous men in the squad setting the pace for the rest; the weaker men try not to be left behind and are even afraid to answer the call of nature for fear of losing a minute or two which they will not be able to make up later.

This was the kind of job I landed in; although I was never a retiring person, protection was not always superfluous. One of my workmates took me under his wing; he was an elderly married man, a natural rebel—unfortunately he was illiterate.

We got on very well together; he used to tell me various stories about revolts and such like. Once he described how doctors and students who were exterminating infected people during a cholera epidemic were thrown off the Nikolayevsky Bridge into the Neva by an angry mob. Looking back I am absolutely amazed how he managed to collect the multiplicity of views he held.

He remembered the People's Will members distributing literature in the factory and how the workers used to

[1] Workers often fall ill from overwork and have to take to bed. In their own peculiar workers' language they call this "falling down on the job."

read it in out-of-the-way corners; while he himself was unable to read he was fully sympathetic to those who were distributing the literature.

Sometimes he would whisper confidentially in my ear that the tsar had been assassinated, that there were good reasons for killing him, but the people did not understand that without the tsar life could be made more tolerable. It should be said that he detested the superintendents and foremen; this feeling also took hold of me and gradually became more and more bitter.

I was satisfied with my first year in the factory although, as you might say, I did not live, but only worked, worked and worked. I worked during the day, in the evening and by night, and sometimes I didn't get home for two days running, although I lived only twenty minutes' walk from the factory. Once I worked on a rush job for sixty hours at a stretch, stopping only to eat.

And where could it all lead to? It is enough to say that coming home from such work once, I staggered into a lamp-post. When my eyes opened I walked on and once again I fell asleep, this time dreaming that I was sailing on the Neva and that the boat had bumped into the bank. When I came to my senses there was no boat and no river bank but only myself clutching the parapet of the Neva bridge.

Working like this you see nothing of life, your mind is empty of all thought, and all you long for is that the next holiday will come soon, and when it does you sleep till noon and later. And again you see nothing, know nothing, and hear nothing; tomorrow back to work, to the same brutalizing, endless, murderous work, without life and without rest.

And for whose benefit? For the capitalist! And what do you get? You work yourself stupid! The one consolation is that you don't understand it all and don't feel how monstrous and inhuman the exploitation really is.

So, in general, the wretched and meaningless life, which is the lot of the majority of people, flowed on. Sometimes we would hear that something had happened somewhere, but we neither understood nor cared.

And with that I'll finish writing about that part of my life before I changed from being only a rank and filer with no ideas or convictions, into a Socialist.

* * *

Once on a day just like countless others that had gone before, the shop was filled with the usual incessant clatter of the driving-belts slipping and sliding round the pulleys; work was in full swing with every worker hard at his job. The shop foreman was roaming around restlessly, first he would be here and next at the other end of the shop; no less restless were the various spongers who made up the section foremen.

I was at my bench working at the vice, putting all my weight on an 18-inch file finishing off eccentric ferrules for locomotives. Two other fitters were working on the same type of ferrules; we were going like mad with our jackets and waistcoats off and our sleeves rolled up. We were all in sweat, one drop after another falling on the bench and on the floor, but no one paid the slightest attention.

Such industry excited neither praise nor blame; as for someone telling us to take a rest from this heart-breaking and soul-destroying work—no one would ever dream of it.

It was almost finishing time, many were beginning to look round hoping to see the usual signs that work was stopping for the day. It was a Saturday, when we didn't wait as usual for the factory whistle to blow, but broke off work ten to fifteen minutes earlier.

"Why bash your brains out, you'll not finish that job today anyway," came a voice from close by—it was a

fitter from the next squad. He was young like myself but I didn't know him personally. I lifted my head and straightened my back, and from habit looked round about for stooges; not seeing any I replied:

"We're working in pairs and I don't want to be last."

"Tomorrow's Sunday, will your squad be working?" began the prudent Kostya (for this is what I shall call my comrade). Apparently he had picked me out earlier as a likely person to attract on to the illustrious and dynamic path of the struggle for freedom, equality and the brotherhood of men. Kostya had only come in contact with these ideas himself but already felt a strong natural urge to convert somebody.

"No, we're not working tomorrow," I said.

"What do you do at home when you're not working?"

"Nothing particular. We're hoping to arrange a party soon, with dancing," I began in the hope that he might be interested in such things.

"Got any books at home?" he asked. "What are you reading now?"

I felt embarrassed for it was a long time since I'd read anything although I had about a dozen books of my own. I didn't understand them and they lay on a small bookshelf as nice ornaments for a young man's room.

But I thought Kostya might like to read them so I asked him to come and look them over any evening or on Sunday. Kostya agreed willingly and after a short silence invited me to be friends with him and come to his flat the following day after dinner.

I was delighted with my new friend; I had many other friends but none of them made quite the same impression on me as Kostya. We left the factory together. Now and again he turned aside to have a word with someone, then we walked on until he pointed out the house where he lived. We parted like good friends after I had again promised to see him on the morrow without fail.

About one o'clock on Sunday I made for Kostya's lodgings and had no difficulty in finding them. The landlady kindly showed me Kostya's room. It was a small square room in which, besides Kostya, there were two other young men, one of whom I recognized because he worked in Kostya's squad, and the other turned out to be his brother. I sat down; we exchanged a word or two and then there was an embarrassing silence. Meanwhile Kostya brought out from somewhere a printed leaflet. He gave it to one of his mates and asked him to read it. We kept quiet while he read the leaflet.

Not knowing its contents I was not paying any special attention to the comrade reading the leaflet or what impression it was making on him, but I noticed that Kostya and the younger brother were watching him very intently and were obviously excited. Nothing was said until the comrade had finished reading; he folded the leaflet and returned it to Kostya; I thought it must be some matter between themselves and that it was none of my business.

"Well, what about it?" Kostya asked the comrade who appeared to be a bit confused.

"Oh, it's very good," he replied abruptly and said no more. There was another long silence; the atmosphere became somewhat oppressive.

"Read it if you want to," said Kostya finally, handing me the leaflet. I unfolded it and began reading. With the first words I sensed that this was something special that I'd never seen or heard of in my life. The first words hit me with special force. My thoughts began racing round and I continued reading only with difficulty.

It hurled abuse at the priests, the tsar and the government, and the more I read the more I became convinced that this was the truth and it was necessary to do what the leaflet asked. At the same time I saw my life being ruined and that I'd end up on the gallows like a criminal! And then, like a hammer blow, came the realization

that there was no heavenly kingdom, it had never existed and had been invented only to deceive the people.

I accepted everything the leaflet said, it made the strongest impression on me. I managed to finish reading it, feeling that I could not digest all the ideas it aroused in me. Having to return it to Kostya at once, I had no opportunity to take note of its contents and have since forgotten them. However, I grasped the main idea and from then on I was anti-government. The People's Will had issued the leaflet.

This was my first acquaintance with illegal literature and the first time I had read open expressions of opposition to the government. I handed the leaflet to Kostya without saying a word, realizing now why he had invited me to see him, and there and then I decided, if need be, to give up all for the cause, including life itself.

I knew that Kostya held the same views and that we were now in this together, but how the other two felt about it I didn't know. So, like them, I kept quiet, trying to show as best I could by my expression that I was pleased and satisfied with the leaflet.

Shortly afterwards the two brothers went away. When we were left alone Kostya and I began a friendly conversation. I had obviously won Kostya's confidence, so without further ado we started discussing ways and means of getting leaflets and books that would help us to expand our knowledge.

First of all Kostya spoke about the Bible, which he knew very well, because until recently he had been a deeply religious person and had waded through many holy books. He tried to explain theology as socialism distorted by the modern priesthood. However, he was not very good at explaining things and couldn't draw me far along that road.

We decided to go to my flat and have a look at my books. I tried to find something useful among them, but

both of us felt that my taste was a bit doubtful, so we agreed to visit the market on the following Sunday and buy some worthwhile books.

Still interested in the leaflet I asked Kostya where he had got it. He said that he had been coming out of the factory one evening after work among a crowd of workers and had been stopped at the gates by a stranger who thrust the leaflet into his hand, saying:

"I dare say you're doing nothing anyway at home, so here, read that."

Kostya read the leaflet that evening and could hardly wait till morning to talk to the man.

Soon afterwards I made the acquaintance of the man who had given Kostya the leaflet. By this time he knew that I had read it and had been told how I reacted to revolutionary ideas and activities which, until then, were quite unknown to me. He knew that I wanted to learn, to learn and act in the manner shown in the leaflet and that I was already trying to attract and enlighten likely persons at every available opportunity.

Noticing Kostya talking several times in the shop with a particular individual I suspected that this was the man who was leading the political work. Once during working hours Kostya introduced me to him as a supporter. He looked a typical worker, capable, with a rough and ready appearance. His eyes seemed to penetrate my innermost being; I felt terribly self-conscious, and after meeting his gaze for a second or two, I had a sinking feeling and lowered my eyes in confusion.

Now and again I took a furtive look at the man. He had an impressive beard, blond and bushy, which seemed to give me more confidence—but when he looked at me again I felt stupid and helpless. How strange it all was! Before this, if I passed this man in the street I would not pay the slightest attention to him nor see anything uncommon about him. He would appear to me to be just an

ordinary person. But now at this turning point in my life I saw in front of me a man—self-reliant, energetic, courageous, wanting to test my sincerity, find out if I'm resolute and persevering, and if I'm really honest in claiming to serve the cause. Sensing that he was thinking on these lines I took fright and couldn't utter a word.

These were the impressions made on me by this man whom I'll now refer to as F. I went over to his bench once expecting to hear something special, but he scared me with his severe attitude and his questions:

"Well, what are you thinking about?"

"Tell me the best books to read," I mumbled.

"What do you want with books? And what will you do when you have read one or two good books?"

"It's bad," I said, "they are cruel, they lie and deceive us."

"And if you find out the truth, what will you do?"

Of course, I didn't know how to reply to such questions, so I said nothing and went back to my bench, turning the questions over in my mind. I was downcast because F. had not explained anything to me, but only made me dizzy with his strange and unintelligible questions. But then it occurred to me that he was only trying to help. I was a little disheartened that F. had treated me so cautiously, but I was more convinced now that I would soon learn everything and really get somewhere.

Kostya and I became inseparable friends; we always went about together everywhere, and were forever discussing something. Forbidden books, mostly from the People's Will, began to appear: we read them thoroughly, taking care, of course, that they did not fall into the wrong hands.

Our circle of friends was growing: on Sundays we went visiting or had visitors of our own. The pattern of our lives was changing considerably, and people both

at the factory and in our lodgings could not help noticing it, but we paid little attention and continued to take a keen interest in the new cause. Whenever we noticed any of our mates who seemed to agree with our views we tried to persuade him to read illegal literature; we were very cautious, however, in approaching new people.

Above all, we avoided like the plague habitual drunkards and dissolute characters generally, or persons related in any way to the factory management. Being young ourselves, we tended to mix more with other youth; one or two unfortunate experiences scared us away from married men as well as middle-aged and elderly men, so the number of our contacts was all the more limited.

We often heard other workers telling about the past work of revolutionaries, how they were arrested and put into narrow stone cells, beaten and lashed; but most of the stories were of people being arrested who were never heard of again. Sometimes we had arguments with workers who believed fanatically in their own stories, and we did not always win these arguments.

Of course, all such tales had an element of truth, if one remembers that the intellectuals who lived among the workers were constantly arrested and nothing more was heard of them or from them. This gave rise to the circulation among the backward workers of fantastic stories, which were passed on from one person to another with every kind of horror added to them. These horrors served then and now as a means of frightening anyone in the least superstitious and uninformed, and who knew nothing about the labour movement.

My comrades and I tried to avoid getting involved in discussions and arguments around these widespread fantasies, but we listened willingly to accounts of past outbreaks and unrest in the Semyannikov factory and how, at one time (in the '70s and '80s), illegal books were being read secretly by the workers.

We were becoming more acquainted with illegal literature and with people of revolutionary convictions; we discussed these matters with comrades, and made plans for all manner of changes in the whole of social life, plans which, when carefully analyzed, would not stand up to criticism; we lived in a constant state of excitement.

Life, which until then had been uneventful and of little interest, now brought us more and more revelations.

About this time we developed a positive hatred for working overtime. In the early evenings, as we were moving through the shop on the lower floor, we always looked up with annoyance at a notice written on the glass of a wall lamp lit by a candle: "Overtime this *evening* from 7 p.m. till 10.30 p.m.," or "Overtime *tonight* from 7.30 p.m. till 2.30 a.m." The notice alternated from day to day, now *evening*, and tomorrow—*night*. The month would therefore drag out into 30 to 45 working days, a fact which the Semyannikov workers would express in their own facetious way: "You and I had more days last month than God himself." In fact these heart-breaking *evenings* and *nights* often added as much as twenty days to the customary working month.

It would be hard to estimate the effect of this night work on the workers' health. Things were arranged in such a cunning way that a man was convinced that if he worked fewer evenings and nights he would receive less on pay-day than the man who had not done a single hour's overtime. Payment was made as follows: the sum earned by the whole squad was divided according to the number of days and the basic daily wage; the surplus was then split up as a percentage to the ruble earned.

It was all right if it was not a rush job: you could go home after work if you wished. But if the work was urgent the foreman would tell the squad to work on; it

was not only ironical, but a mockery, when the factory whistle signalled the end of the shift.

The whistle simply warned us that we had so many more hours to work before we could go home, that our check-numbers had been taken off the board and put in the foreman's office, and it was impossible to get out of the factory without them. Complaining to the foreman would get you nowhere; it would end in a scrap with him and even the sack. The same thing happened every day; the workers cursed the overtime up hill and down dale, but had to go on working it just the same.

Before we came in contact with illegal literature Kostya and I used to work nights regularly: we were not particularly worried about it and never gave a thought to its effect on our health. But now overtime really got us down, and we began to find excuses to get out of it. At the same time we set about agitating and explaining to the workers the harmful character of overtime.

Although Kostya and I knew the life of factory workers, generally we knew very little about the living conditions of the workers in the textile industry. Personally, I was not badly off economically, and I had clean and comfortable lodgings. We listened with great interest to a young worker, who used to work in a manufacturing works, telling stories of life among the workers there. We decided to make a closer acquaintance with this unfamiliar life and agreed to make contact with the workers in this industry with a view to going among them and doing propaganda work. Gradually we began to know something about them and the conditions they worked in.

Once, when we were having this explained to us, mention was made of a new building put up by the factory owner to accommodate his workers; it seemed it was something special in their lives. However, we could

not quite grasp what kind of place it was. Some said it was provided with special conveniences, others declared that it was just another large barracks smelling of the factory, with the good and the bad, the pleasant and unpleasant, all mixed up; to others it seemed to be just another downright horror.

Kostya and I decided to go one Sunday to look over the place, meet the tenants and so on. Knowing that it was difficult for strangers to get into these factory-owned houses, we agreed to dress in the style peculiar to these workers, all of whom were from the village. On Saturday evening I made my way to the Alexandrovsky market where I bought an ordinary calico shirt with a belt, and a cap to match. On Sunday, looking like a village lad and feeling awkward, I stole out of the flat and went off to fetch Kostya. Still feeling uneasy and afraid of attracting attention to our clothes we proceeded along Schlusselburg Road to the Maxwell factories which we reached after half-an-hour's walk.

About 25 yards from the main road we saw an imposing building still looking new from the outside. This must be it, we thought. We walked up a narrow lane, along which rails had been laid, to have a closer look at the handsome structure. On entering the yard we saw that it was crowded with men and women workers. Most of the men were young and were standing in groups arguing heatedly, jostling one another and shaking their fists. Some girls were sitting here and there apart from the others. Some were bandying words with the lads. Often they would shriek and run away, but soon they would come back to their own circle.

The scene reminded one vividly of a pretty big village in any province. The girls' dresses were gaudy, completely different from those worn by the girls in town and especially in the capital. The lads wore stiff-leathered top boots with trousers tucked inside, and a

few of them were playing accordions. Some, however, wore outfits that struck us as being on the plain side. They were walking around in striped, calico pants held together by unattractive-looking belts, and wearing old ragged shoes on their bare feet. This rig-out embarrassed neither them nor anyone else there. The crudity of their dress conjured up an unpleasant, though familiar, picture of the Smolensk joiners in Kronstadt.

We thought we would look inside the building first and then return to the yard to mix with the crowd there. A wide door in the middle of the building led inside; people were coming and going through this door all the time, so in we went too.

A large broad staircase indicated that the place had been built to accommodate a large number of tenants; the walls were done over with ordinary distemper, but looked clean and tidy; strong-looking banisters spoke of the solidity and durability of the house.

We went up the first flight of stairs and into a corridor where a dreadful suffocating stench hit us like a blow on the face: it came from the lavatories and spread right along the whole corridor. We didn't venture farther on that floor, but went up higher where the air might be easier to breathe, but the same abominable, stifling smell was there too.

We moved along the corridor a little but returned and climbed to the next floor. The air was still foul, so we agreed to put up with it and probe more closely; we walked to the end of the corridor where we found the lavatories and went in to have a look.

Out in the corridor again we picked up our courage and began to open the room doors and glance inside. Apparently this caused no surprise to the tenants for we were not asked whom we were seeking.

Looking into one of the rooms we found it vacant; we walked in quietly and closed the door behind us. We

could see the general layout of the room. Two beds stood against the wall along the left side, and two along the right side of the room. They took up the whole length of the wall with practically no space between them, so the length of the walls was about equal to the length of the two beds. By the window there was a table and an unsightly-looking chair; these represented all the furnishings of the room.

The room was for single men, two to each bed, or eight to a room. They had each to pay a rent (or, more correctly, it was deducted from their wages) of one and a half to two rubles a month. Such a room, therefore, meant a rent of fourteen to sixteen rubles monthly, while wages fluctuated between eight and twelve to fifteen rubles monthly. And the factory owner prided himself on having provided this accommodation for his workers whom he employed on the understanding that they would lodge here, space permitting.

We left the room and looked around a little more. All the rooms were similar, with the same oppressive air about them. Our desire to explore began to wane—we looked into the communal kitchen, the wash-house and the rooms for married people. In the latter the dismal outlook was broken by the patchwork quilts, made of a numerous variety of brightly coloured rags, spread over the curtained-off beds. The curtains served two purposes; they helped to hide the poverty, and also provided some elementary privacy, because alongside there was another bed for yet another family. It was terribly depressing for me, a skilled worker living a more respectable life and having greater needs.

We went down to the entrance. On the way we stopped for a moment on the broad staircase to look at the automatic fire extinguishers. But all the hoses, lead piping, and other equipment could not inspire in us any respect or trust, nor could the copper cocks and screws make us

forget the bare, dismal rooms and the overcrowded beds, and the walls on which were traces of where numerous bugs had been crushed and smeared.

A grumbling mutter of sounds could be heard from the corridors, and this, together with the disgusting smell rising continually from the lavatories, had the effect of increasing our bitterness and hatred for the oppressors, and at the same time, for the ignorance which smothered the truth about our insufferable existence.

Oh! to bring more enlightenment into these dark places!

It would be consoling to think that even in this building there must be someone explaining things to the workers, that maybe among the crowd in the yard there were intelligent people whose numbers would grow from day to day. Kostya even began an arithmetical calculation as to the progressive increase in the number of thinking individuals among them, but it was impossible to go by this method, it could lead only to disappointment; so perhaps it was better to be pessimistic in that respect than optimistic. But that's by the way.

Coming out into the yard and the fresh air we strolled over to one group of workers who were gambling at pitch and toss, with practically everyone taking part in it. Their faces were tense with excitement; there was a lot of cursing and it looked as if at any moment there would be a free fight with bloody consequences. We crossed over to another group who were playing cards for money and here again the air was full of curses.

These lads and lasses would not have welcomed our interference in their affairs; one has to be careful when approaching a village beauty, and must talk to her in her own language; it is not entirely safe for strangers to do this.

Therefore, we kept our distance and ambled over the grass of the large courtyard, looking at the sheds and

cellars and other things of little interest. Then we left this peculiar place with its depressing atmosphere and went home. It was obvious, however, that these people probably thought themselves lucky to be living there after life in the village.

This was our first experience with the living conditions of these unskilled workers and it depressed me considerably. As a consequence, even when I was living elsewhere, I could not get over my disgust at such conditions. I could never explain to my own satisfaction the fortitude of man and the modesty of his demands on life and how he could be satisfied with such a miserable, poverty-stricken existence.

That's the wall against which many heads have been broken, and how many more will smash their skulls on it before it gives way. These painful experiences did not weaken our resolve, nor make us want to retreat; on the contrary, we redoubled our efforts to improve our knowledge, the more quickly to develop the struggle against such terrible exploitation, against such fearful oppression and ignorance among the people; so we began diligently to sharpen our weapons for the struggle—that is, to read and develop ourselves.

It was clear that without assistance from outside we would not be able to explain to our own satisfaction the many questions that were arising. Our understanding was very limited; we were meeting opposition and argument more frequently in our propaganda work. Our opponents were putting smart questions that often baffled us, and though we never lost faith in our own views, we felt these setbacks very keenly.

I remember very well how Kostya and I reached a very strange conclusion regarding an economic problem. It was a question of piece-work. In carrying out our propaganda with someone we often put a question we had worked out ourselves: "What is better for the work-

ers under present conditions—to be industrious or to be lazy?" We usually got the answer that it was better to be industrious; then we began to explain to our opponent that if one works specially hard then perhaps: 1) the piece-rates might be cut, 2) one worker would be doing two men's work, thus throwing a large number of workers out of employment, which would then have a still worse effect on the lowering of piece-rates, and so on.

But if one worked quietly, without hurrying, the piece-rates would rise quickly, or at least they would not fall, and because the work was proceeding at a slower pace, more workers would be required, so there would be fewer unemployed and wages would be increased. We got agreement that we were right, but it was an unwilling agreement, as no one could find a sound objection. Even we who thought ourselves the victors could not reconcile ourselves to the idea that laziness was a more useful attribute for society than industriousness, but we could not find a way out of the dilemma. Such questions came up more and more often and we had to go to F. for explanations. Seeing that we were strongly affected by the spirit of socialism, and having neither the possibility nor the means of conversing with us more often, he asked one of his friends who lived near us, to help.

Our new guide turned out to be an intelligent person who made a very good impression on us. As soon as we had a free moment we went to him with our questions. Besides this, we were attracted to his home life as to a magnet. He had his own flat which seemed to us the last word in comfort, presenting a picture of what our own future could be like.

Our new friend had always plenty of books for us, and at the same time, plenty of advice to be cautious in our work. We knew he held the post of treasurer in the organization and was the contact between us and the

town committee. He was acquainted with the intelligentsia and generally with the whole movement, so that we were in a position to learn, to hear much sound sense, and receive answers to the questions that troubled us.

Right away he exerted a very beneficial influence on us both. Above all, he taught us to be accurate and prudent in our relations with people; whenever we came his first question was how careful had we been in coming, had we been followed? Possibly it was fear for himself, and the influence of his wife, that made him speak so often to us on the question of spies, raids and shadowing.

It was good advice, nevertheless, and we kept a careful check on our movements, although probably it never occurred to any one to follow us. We adopted the same strict attitude at work.

Gradually we became connected with circles of all kinds, we were even shown the accounts of the Red Cross, besides which, we received many useful books and any available illegal literature.

In this way we saw part of the winter through, then spring, and soon summer, too, was drawing to a close. With the approach of autumn we looked forward impatiently to the opening of the Sunday school about which we had heard so much. It was spoken of very highly, there would be many good people there, but above all we would get education; the teachers gave their services free, glad to help bring enlightenment to the people and ready to suffer government persecution and oppression, if it would only advance the people's cause.

Kostya and I understood very well who the teachers were, and we expected much from the school. We tried to persuade others to enrol, but most of them said they could not spare the time because of evening and

night work at the factory, and we had to admit the truth of this. Another big obstacle was shift work; nevertheless we persuaded no fewer than fifteen workers to register. There will be more about the school later; meantime let's go back again to our first experience in illegal work.

Although F. had scared me off at first he did not lose contact with us. He tried on every possible and convenient occasion to give us the benefit of his experience and explain difficult questions. We were very much under his influence, looking on him as a sort of father for whom we had a deep feeling of respect.

I remember once, soon after reading the first illegal leaflet, Kostya and I went to F.'s flat. The place was in semi-darkness and seemed to have two rooms; the rent of the flat was undoubtedly high, but it had a night-marish appearance inside, and I took a strong dislike to it. In preparation for the meeting, I had dressed with great care, donning a starched shirt and so on, but my outfit was in keeping neither with the atmosphere of the flat nor with the mood of the tenants. I felt unhappy, and rebuked myself for turning up in a starched shirt, deciding to dress differently next time I came, and resolving from then on to stop wearing foppish clothes—but I changed my mind about that later.

It was here in this flat that I first met one of the intelligentsia whom we called P. I. He left me with enduring memories of his outstanding qualities: he was the first person of all those I knew who came among the workers with the sole aim of helping them to learn and understand life, and he subordinated everything else to this purpose.

It is difficult to explain how deeply Kostya and I valued these men, particularly when one remembers that we untutored people could not help wondering why people from other walks of life were devoting themselves

unselfishly to our education. And even after more close acquaintance with others of the intelligentsia, both men and women teachers, we could not rid ourselves of this feeling for a long time. How terrible it was to lose any one of these people for whom we would have done anything, undergone any trial, or made any sacrifice!

Of course, in meeting the intelligentsia very often, we gradually got over thinking of them as men set apart. To lose one of the intelligentsia was the same to us as losing an intimate fellow-worker. But this feeling came only after long association with them, when our first, acute impressions of them had mellowed and changed into ordinary honest regard.

Our thirst for knowledge was so great that Kostya and I, listening to the conversation that evening when we first met P. I. at F.'s flat, just drank in everything that was said. We had a strong urge to do something out of the ordinary—but our knowledge was still limited and we felt shamefaced about it. There were three or four others present besides us and the tenant, F., that evening. I recall one other person who turned out later to be a provocateur—his name was Kozlov. At the beginning of our acquaintance we had a certain respect for him—but it didn't last long.

Here I find difficulty in trying to explain how sharply our views differed from the trends in the People's Will, but that these differences did exist I remember very well. The above-mentioned intellectual once brought us a leaflet issued by the People's Will; giving it to F. we asked him if it was suitable for us—Social-Democrats. Evidently F. didn't like it because we never saw it again, and when we asked him about it later he said he hadn't got it.

As we were not taking an active part in the controversy between our people and the People's Will, we did not see the difference in the two points of view, but were

inclined towards the Social-Democratic view, perhaps because of the influence of F. and the intellectual and of our very good friend.

The People's Will leaflets appeared among us less frequently; we were not very fond of the People's Will supporters, and we had a particular dislike for Kozlov, who, as I said before, showed himself later to be a scoundrel. And we liked least of all one of them who worked in the same shop as ourselves. He was constantly speaking of a plan he had drawn up to assassinate the tsar, but it was just day-dreaming and wishful thinking, because we saw no real activity on the part of the People's Will, and we soon became tired of listening to that kind of talk.

It was understandable that if he was really an ardent advocate of the assassination of the tsar or any of his legions, he would have worked secretly, in a conspiratorial fashion, that is, if he had any faith in his plan and really intended to put it into operation. It follows that he would have kept quiet about it, and if the plan did materialize he would be honoured as a hero.

Such a plan, however, could have no real influence on the masses, because they wouldn't know anything about it. The majority of those who would praise him would not, in fact, be supporters of his policy. But I never met a person who really meant business on this question. Those I did come across simply liked to hear themselves talk about the various people they would like to assassinate, but their talk came to nothing and they didn't try very hard to push their ideas.

There were still many people untouched by our propaganda. When we approached anyone who seemed a likely supporter, and offered him a legal or illegal book to read, or asked him to enrol for the school, or to begin studying, it was obvious that no one had ever spoken to him on such matters before, or had tried to persuade him

or influence him with propaganda. We considered our own influence too weak to convince someone who had seen more of the world than we had.

One time at work I went over to speak to one of the People's Will members; he outlined a grotesque plan to blow up the Winter Palace with the aim of assassinating the tsar. While I did not give any importance to the plan, the idea nevertheless stayed with me, and I tried to convince myself that it was feasible. The real defect of the plan was that it required a special device that no one had even thought of, and it was therefore just another fantasy. However, I was not fully satisfied.

In this mood I went to ask F. his opinion; in a few words I gave him the gist of my conversation with the member of the People's Will, telling him about the plan. He listened to me and then replied icily that if anyone wanted to kill the tsar they did not need an elaborate plan; all they had to do was to go to Nevsky Prospect, rent a suitable room, or take such a room in a hotel and shoot the tsar when he was passing by. People have been known to shoot sparrows, he said, what's difficult about shooting the tsar! He's a very big fellow!

The answer left me without a word to say; the ironical smile on F.'s usually serious face made me blush with shame; I was furious with myself for discussing such a fantastic scheme.

Confused by the look on F.'s face I returned to my own place, deciding never again to speak to him about such questions. In fact I did not go to him so often, but got down seriously to reading books and newspapers. Sometimes I fell asleep on a chair with my head lying on a book. On waking up I would hurriedly blow out the lamp so that a policeman, or night-watchman, would not wonder why there was a light in my room at such a late hour.

Day followed day; we had to work overtime almost every evening and night and even on Sundays, so we had no time for reading, and the few free hours we did get went by terribly quickly. Although I was in the heyday of youth, I began to feel tired and exhausted and this had a serious effect on my health. F. never did nightwork; we knew that there were daily conflicts between him and the foreman on the question, and they always ended in the same way, by F. getting his check-number and going home. He won out every time because he was a key worker, and when they threatened him with dismissal, he just called their bluff.

With Kostya and me it was another matter; they could find other workers for our jobs any day, and so we had to live almost exclusively in the shop, sleeping at least twice a week under the bench rather than lose time going home.

No matter what happened we gathered at F.'s flat on Sunday mornings or in the evenings; P. I. was always there, too. He read to us Lassalle's work on the idea of the Fourth Estate, or about the history of culture, the class struggle, etc. We spent some very pleasant Sundays in this fashion, getting more and more acquainted with and consolidating our revolutionary activity. It was here in F.'s flat that we first met P. A. Morozov,[1] in our view one of the best educated

[1] P. A. Morozov, a weaver, was an agitator among the Petersburg workers who was regularly subjected to arrests and banishment. While in exile in Solvychegodsk he was closely connected with N. Y. Fedoseyev. After exile in Vologda he came to Yekaterinoslav, where, though very ill, he did tremendous revolutionary work. He was arrested again in April, 1899, and when released from prison he was hopelessly ill. He was sent to the town of Sychovka, Smolensk province, where he died. The Leninist *Iskra*, in an article dedicated to his memory, wrote: "The deceased will be numbered among the best agitators of our movement." (No. 4, May, 1901.—*Ed.*)

workers, and we thought constantly of how we could pattern ourselves on him. We did not approve of a weakness of his—he drank vodka, and was sometimes very drunk.

Kostya and I were of the opinion that no conscious Socialist should drink vodka, and we even condemned smoking. At that time we propagated morality in the strictest sense of the word. Briefly, we insisted that a Socialist should be an exemplary person in all respects, and we ourselves tried to live up to this principle. We never had any secrets from each other, in fact we wanted to share a room together. Thinking, however, that we might need a separate room for conspiratorial work, we decided to keep both places, maybe later we could have two study circles, and if there were only one, it could take place alternately in the two flats.

We knew that a watch was being kept on F. and gradually prepared ourselves for being without him. Out of a desire for greater caution P. A. Morozov decided to rent another flat, which he did very quickly, but this only complicated matters because a number of people already known to the police lodged in the flat—among them was F.

The flat where F. lived contained the library for the whole of the Nevsky Gate district; we found great satisfaction in browsing through the books, vexed that we did not have the time to read any of them. In fact it would have taken us from six weeks to two months to read a book by Buckle. Having such limited time at our disposal we looked with involuntary envy at the books, but all in all we read very little. Anything we had learned was picked up from stories, conversations and short talks with P. I., but even so we were by far not the same people that we had been earlier. It was interesting how Morozov carried books from one house to another;

he managed to pack about fifteen books round his body and walked past the spies quite safely.[1]

In this same flat we became acquainted with many of the textile workers; thus our circle of friends kept on growing; we were becoming more enlightened ourselves, but still felt keenly the handicap of not having enough leisure time. Here we learned that the textile mill men had a working day that was not shorter than ours, although their wages were much less than in the metal industry (their hours were from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. while we worked from 7 a.m. to 10.30 p.m., including overtime, or from 7 a.m. until 2.30 a.m. the following morning, and again from 7 a.m. till 10.30 p.m.). So, while we were slightly better off, we felt the need to press for equality in working hours.

The winter passed more or less in this fashion. Kostya and I did nothing in particular and nothing seemed to be happening anywhere; the workers were not making a fuss; if anything was going on elsewhere we knew little about it, because at that time it was very unwise to be talking too much, and there were no leaflets either in the textile mills or in the engineering factories. Summer arrived; we had waited for it hopefully but it turned out to be different from what we expected.

At the beginning of summer, or maybe it was at the end of spring, we came into work one morning and were startled to find that F. was absent. We went to another worker who had lived in the same flat with F., but we got nothing out of him except that he supposed F. had probably overslept and would check in after dinner. We

[1] This method became known to the police; in Yekaterinoslav there were frequent examples of the police and spies tapping suspects on the chest and sides to see if they had illegal literature on them and if so the person was arrested immediately. There were several cases of people caught in this way who were carrying leaflets and other forbidden literature.

had a fearful premonition about it; we ran up several times to the next floor where F. worked to see if he had come, but it was no use and we came back each time feeling depressed. We were now realizing more and more just how valuable and important this man was to us and how grievous would be our loss if our fears were justified.

The dinner break came; impatiently we returned to work early in the expectation of news, as we ourselves did not dare to go near F.'s flat. And then a comrade, his head bowed, came over to tell us the details of the raid on F.'s flat and his arrest. Of course, nothing unlawful was found since it had all been safely hidden; nevertheless they had seized F. and taken him away. Where was he and what was happening to him? With these questions troubling us we went back to our places, heavy at heart, each thinking his own thoughts about what had happened to F.

The shop was working at full speed; we were all hurrying to finish our work. What for? To get another job to do, and again hurry? What for? Again for the same thing: the boss needs profit, so—work; don't look up until they hand you your miserable wage. And then before me rose a picture of the gendarmes' raids and searches.

And our F.—he's gone, our patriarch and father, with his thoughtful eyes and the serious expression on his face, with his inexhaustible energy and courage. Oh, how tragic to lose such people, especially if one is not accustomed to such a loss. Subsequently I looked on arrests quite calmly but this was different and it was terribly hard to face the reality.

Kostya and I now had to think out questions for ourselves, which were previously decided by others. F.'s arrest put new energy into our young bodies. Our good friend, meantime, tried to throw cold water on our efforts but it had no effect. We began to look on him as a faint-

hearted and worthless fellow, although we continued to see him for explanations of various questions. He kept warning us to lie low if we did not want to land in prison and ruin our young lives. We paid no attention to this advice but kept our own course as best we could.

About this time Kostya was transferred to another shop where he was put in charge of boys, and he began right away to do propaganda work among them, bringing all kinds of books for the young people. We searched through the bookshops for them, even inquiring for two books which we did not know were forbidden. Finally we managed to begin listing books which could be asked for quite openly.

We were feeling lonesome but not despondent. Kostya found a job for Morozov in the same shop as himself. This cheered us up immensely, firstly, because Morozov was blacklisted in the factories and secondly, because with the improvement in his economic position he might feel happier. But we were pleased most of all because he was near us; he could give us guidance, help us to develop and improve our knowledge and thus enable us to advance the cause more quickly.

We had plenty to do now; we had to start training young people, lads of our own age and even younger, and bring out into the light of day a number of the abuses perpetrated by the management.

Kostya and I had dinner every day in his room, which he had rented not long before from a supporter in the factory who was burdened with a large family. My first questions to Kostya were about his talks with Morozov that day, hoping to hear something interesting, but it seemed that Morozov was too preoccupied with learning his job, as he was not accustomed to it. We hoped that he would soon settle down and then, perhaps, he might be more sociable.

But things turned out differently—Morozov was invited to the police-station, arrested, and put in the remand prison. This new blow practically orphaned us; we were left without anyone to guide us, because our old friend became more and more frightened. Wishing to be rid of the illegal books in his flat, on each visit he made us take away as many as we could carry until practically all of them were brought to our own rooms.

That summer we began our propaganda work like fully grown adults; we did not feel ready for independent work but there was nothing else for it; we just had to face the facts. F. was gone, P. I. was not available, Morozov was in jail, and in fact we often felt abandoned.

One day a man came to the Nevsky Gate district, one who was already well versed in revolutionary work. He had much experience and was wholly devoted to the cause. Right away we found a new source of energy and our situation began to improve rapidly. Not one Sunday went by without some visitors coming to see us, or us visiting others. Contact was now established with the factories of Pal, Maxwell, Thornton and the Nikolayevsky railway workshops. Meetings were taking place regularly, and though they were very informal, we were united in purpose and aim, and thus felt the upsurge in the movement (if I can use such an expression).

Enthralled by our revolutionary activity and our widening circle of friends, we became absorbed in work and did not notice that it was almost time for the opening of the Sunday school. We waited impatiently for the opening day and finally it arrived. Of course, every one of us had signed up for the school, which we looked on as a splendid cultural institution and at the same time a place where the sheep could be separated from the goats, the good from the bad, a place where people

would get to know one another and form a closely-knit group of friends, however small.

We made preparations for systematic study in the circles; there may have been other circles, but I did not know nor try to find out about them. As soon as autumn came to Petersburg the intelligentsia arrived from all parts and our busy intellectual life began. Kostya and I were quite beside ourselves with the all-round sweep of our stormy life. Our new friend, we'll call him N. (V. A. Shelgunov.—*Ed.*), was a worker lodging in the Nevsky Gate district and connected with the intelligentsia, who evidently had quite a number of such workers and wished to organize systematic studies in the Nevsky Gate district as well. N. set up a circle there.

It was arranged that the study group be held in my room as the most convenient and where there were no strangers. There were seven persons in the group including the lecturer: we began with Marx's political economy. The lecturer[1] explained this science to us verbally, without notes, stopping often to ask for objections or start an argument, and then encouraging us to justify our point of view on the question before us.

Our discussions were therefore very lively and interesting and accustomed us to speaking in public; this method of study proved to be the best way to explain questions to the students. We were all very pleased with the lectures and constantly amazed at the wisdom of our lecturer: among ourselves we joked that he had such a large brain that it had pushed his hair out.

These lectures at the same time taught us to do independent work, and to collect our own material; the lecturer gave us lists of previously prepared questions which prompted us to make a closer study and observation of factory and mill life. During working hours we

[1] The lecturer was Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.—*Ed.*

found excuses to go into another shop to collect material, either by personal observation or, where possible, in conversation with the workers.

My tool-box was always full of notes of all kinds; during the dinner-hour I tried to write up the data on hours and wages in our shop. Naturally, the biggest obstacle in the way of collecting material was the shortage of free time; still, things were moving forward, although not so vigorously as they should have been.

The work of the Sunday school took its normal course. The lively and bold remarks of the lecturers engendered in us a special regard for the school: there was no end to our praise. We understood well the methods used by the teachers and simply marvelled at their skill in winning the confidence of each student, whether he came from the town, or a factory, or a village. With every session we drew closer and closer to each other and to our teachers, for whom we felt a particular respect; a sort of kinship developed between us, an intimacy of ideas held in common.

Arriving at school and sitting at the desk we waited for our tutor with a special feeling of expectancy, and her arrival filled us with a joy that is hard to explain. Every group had the same experience. All the students attending the school could not but wonder at and praise all they saw and heard there, so well and confidently did the teachers pass on their knowledge. More than that, sometimes a student would ask a friend to come to his group to meet the teacher and hear the lecture; I myself went into other groups for this purpose.

The teachers were also anxious to help us outside the school; with this in mind they invited several of us to their flat one Sunday. We accepted the invitation gladly and on that day about one o'clock (or two o'clock—I can't remember) five or six of us found ourselves in town. In the flat we sat down at desks; in front of each

of us was a notebook containing the script of one of the characters of the comedy *The Minor*. We were told that it would be useful to learn the parts and then, perhaps, we could play the comedy in public.

I didn't know what had happened in previous study circles, if other students had expressed the wish for this. However, Kostya and I came to the flat another day convinced that learning the parts of this comedy was also a kind of comedy. For as soon as we arrived, instead of working on the comedy, we were taken into the dining-room. The samovar was on the table along with savouries; over tea, the conversation was not at all about *The Minor*, but about the cruelties of the Russian government.

We were shown pictures from the famine-stricken areas, photographs of starving migrants, mass burials, etc. Our friends were trying to "agitate" us, but Kostya and I were already wholly devoted to the cause, so we decided to propose that they teach us not the comedy but all they could give us in the way of knowledge. As for the tea and savouries, we said not to serve these: it was an expense, we knew, for the tutors, who were not wealthy people.

However, our visits to this place stopped soon afterwards thanks to the gendarmes, but the memory of those talks still lives with me and always will.

I should mention that in addition to the school, the lessons at the teachers' flat, and the regular studies going on at my place, we maintained contact with the intellectual P. I., who continued to visit us about once a week when eight or nine comrades gathered in another flat. He read a number of lectures to us on different themes. We ourselves read part of Lassalle's works attentively; then we read Cannan. The book made a profound impression on me.

Fatigued by work and studies we often fell asleep right there in the room, making sure beforehand that the books were put out of the way, though sometimes we forgot even to do this. We would lie down to sleep about midnight and be up again at 4 a.m. or 4.30 a.m., as at this time the factories opened their jaws and began to swallow up countless masses of workers.

This period was one of intense activity in the sense of mental development; every minute was precious, every hour we were not at work was defined and allocated beforehand; our whole week was strictly apportioned. When I look back on this period I wonder where on earth we got the energy for such an intensive life. But it was perfectly clear why there were so few politically developed workers in other towns and localities where there were few intellectuals whose absence was always felt very keenly.

It is also perfectly clear why the Petersburg workers found it easier to raise from amongst themselves courageous and politically advanced workers, although not less energetic and heroic fighters were brought forward in the provinces, too, especially where they had opportunities for contact with intellectual life. We Petersburg workers were then surrounded on all sides by the intelligentsia, who quite often insisted that we ourselves should undertake to help other workers with education in the study groups; this, however, could best be done at first in the provinces, where the intelligentsia were very scarce, or in places where there were none at all.

On this basis, as will be seen below, a special kind of relationship developed between the workers and the intelligentsia. At this time we were simply overwhelmed with studies and offers from the intellectuals to help in our education; of course, this did not always bring the best results. The main reason was the lack of enough

free time for studies; moreover, many of us were unable to assimilate all we were taught because we were so exhausted by our work in the factories.

This is how we fared in Petersburg, in the Nevsky Gate district, at the end of autumn, 1894, when the creative work in the study circles was proceeding slowly. It was becoming clear that the intelligentsia were making preparations to spread their influence more widely among the masses.

Now and then there was talk about this in the circle; however, it was new work of which we had no experience and none of us was capable of taking a leading part in it. Therefore, it was understandable why we were in no special hurry to begin this activity.

Returning from town one evening after buying books, Kostya and I ran into P. A. Morozov on the tram-car: he had just been released from the remand prison, and with a bundle of books and linen was on his way to his sister's flat. Naturally, we were delighted with this unexpected and pleasant meeting, there and then taking Morozov to Kostya's flat where we bombarded him with questions about his experiences at the interrogation, what charges had been laid against him, his life in prison, and many other questions of the same sort.

Then he told us that he was being banished to his own locality. This was very disheartening news because our meeting with him had cheered us immensely: we had another capable leader, and now things would get better and better. In a few words we explained to him how matters stood with us, and, of course, he was pleased with our successes. The evening passed all too quickly; we accompanied him part of the way to his sister's house. Caution dictated that we do not go into the thickly populated part of the village of Smolenskoye. We parted on the most friendly terms; on the way home

we talked over our impressions of the evening, imbued with an even greater desire to sacrifice for the cause.

This was a feeling typical among our young people, particularly those who were sincerely devoted to our aims. We were constantly reiterating one and the same thing: if someone is arrested, why should I have to take greater care or be, say, less active? What, then, am I better or worse than he is, why did they arrest him and not me? Or, maybe, you think I couldn't stand the questioning? No, I want to show that I'm a man who would never betray the cause, so why should I try to avoid arrest?

Such sentiments and expressions, forceful and insistent, were always repeated wholesale after someone had been arrested. Once I wrote a note to the comrades on this matter to explain why it was harmful to the cause and why such views were incorrect. I said that the important thing was to hold out as long as possible, to remain unnoticed and try to sell oneself dearly; so that something valuable remained behind (in the shape of a greater number of comrades in freedom) after one's arrest.

However, this was not always accepted; in fact I'm convinced that it was this circumstance that partly explained my own arrest. To put it briefly, it is desirable that everyone, right from the start, should be scrupulous and conscientious in regard to themselves and their actions.

Shortly after Morozov left at the beginning of winter, I was aroused early one morning by a knock at my door. I am a light sleeper and was wide awake almost as soon as I heard the knock. Of course, I was quite sure it was the police, and knowing that there was nothing concealed in the flat, I went calmly to open the door, to let the enemy in, so to speak, the people who would, perhaps, throw me into prison. My nerves were on edge,

but I tried to maintain an outward calm, and happy in the thought that they would find nothing incriminating, I went into the kitchen where the old landlady, with much moaning and groaning, was pulling herself together to go and open the door.

I told her not to be alarmed, went into the corridor and heard a strangely familiar voice. Apparently my fears concerning the police were somewhat premature; yet I knew they would come, sooner or later. Before me was a woman, trembling and weeping; it was Kostya's landlady, an illiterate woman, but one who believed instinctively in the justice of our cause—she told me that Kostya had been arrested.

She had witnessed the whole of the raid and the arrest, and as soon as they had taken Kostya away in the cab (she was just as upset about losing him as if he was a near and dear kinsman), she had run to warn me, leaving her weeping children. Instead of trying to calm her I said that they would probably be after me, too, right away, and told her to go home so that she would not be found in my room; still crying, she returned to her children.

I set to work energetically to clean the room of notes and anything else that might be useful to the police; a couple of hours passed, it was getting near the time to go to work—still no sign of them. I went off to the factory, feeling the loss of my dear friend, my comrade, whose life and cause were my own; but it was his fate to be the first to fall into the clutches of the police.

What will happen to him? What charges will they bring against him? Did they find forbidden literature at his flat? These questions went whirling round in my head and I could not get rid of the idea that I'd soon be subjected to the same ordeal. We were such close friends (indeed, I had dinner at his flat every day), that I could not understand why they had not been watching me, too.

It turned out, however, that Kostya had been arrested because of a letter in which his full name and address had been mentioned. It was good to know that nothing relating to his revolutionary activities had been found in the search of his room. Although his arrest was unexpected, nevertheless, we had foreseen such an eventuality; perhaps this is why it did not affect me so keenly. The worst part of it was the setback to the political work he was doing in his shop, where there were many young workers to whom he was accustomed. It was out of the question for me to go into this shop and I had to be satisfied with doing what I could among people from there whom I tried to meet outside working hours. The study circle which met in my room continued regularly and without interruption just as before, although we were all downhearted at losing one of our comrades.

Soon after Kostya's arrest N. told me that I had to attend a general meeting of Petersburg workers where a number of questions would be decided; I recall that three workers, including myself, from the Nevsky Gate district went to the meeting which was held in a worker's house, in the outskirts of the town. There were about fifteen or so present; also, if I remember right, either one or two of the intelligentsia.

Before the meeting began the assembled delegates conversed quietly and intimately among themselves; then without any ceremony or formality we got down to discuss and debate the various questions on the agenda.

One other comrade and I took no part in the discussion. Certainly I did not feel competent to speak at such a meeting (and I'm sure this was true of the other comrade), where most of those present were leading workers, or at least experienced and accustomed to hold their own in such circumstances, and able to present their ideas and proposals firmly and confidently.

The most of them, of course, knew in advance what was going to be discussed, and had attended similar meetings before, where they had gained self-confidence. I listened carefully to the debates and was able to follow the main points. I remember very well that a proposal was advanced to create a central workers' fund for the whole of Petersburg, the purpose of which was to co-ordinate all the district funds which would pay a percentage of money collected into the central fund.

The aim of this fund was to help people who had been arrested and, in case of need, to replenish any district fund when required. This proposal roused a great deal of discussion, particularly on a point about the intelligentsia having an accumulation of money while the workers' funds were empty, and at a time when there were urgent demands for help that could not be met.

A number of the speakers insisted that part of the money held by the intelligentsia should be allocated to the workers' fund, and said this with a vehemence that really surprised me. I wondered at their fervour: it was just as though the money belonged to them personally; I kept quiet, however, and continued to listen, afraid that if I spoke I would say something foolish. The question was finally decided by accepting a proposal to transfer 100 rubles from the fund belonging to the intelligentsia to the workers' fund.

After this there was a secret ballot to elect a treasurer and two other responsible officials (I can't recall for which posts). Because the names of those present were not disclosed for reasons of secrecy it was decided to use the following method of election: each person sat in a definite place and was given a number—if I remember right, mine was 13; small pieces of clean paper of equal size were handed round; we wrote the number of the person of our choice on the paper, which was then folded and placed in a hat. After shuffling, the papers were un-

folded and counted; the person whose number occurred most times was declared elected.

When the election was over I rose from my chair, blushing furiously and feeling none too happy, and went over to the table, put down ten rubles and said:

"Comrades, I received these ten rubles through a person in the Red Cross for the benefit of the Petersburg workers."

Everyone listened attentively; something was said, I don't remember what, because I heard nothing more until I had recovered from my embarrassment. The newly-elected treasurer, in accordance with his new duties, went over to the table and lifted the money.

Following this, some other questions were discussed; the debate continued, but I can't remember anything more about it. The meeting began to disperse gradually, the comrades leaving in ones and twos. Evening was drawing on, and together with another comrade from the Nevsky Gate district, we set off immediately as we had a long way to go. This was the first meeting I attended as a delegate, though not yet an elected one, because we had to observe the rules of conspiracy; I had expected a bigger and more representative gathering, nevertheless the meeting had quite a big effect on me.

I continued working in the factory and was lucky enough to find another job in a different squad where I refused categorically to work overtime. I managed to get away with it for the time being. The whole squad knew me by then; they were aware of my views and even suspected that I could provide them with illegal literature. There were cases when men from other squads came over to my bench and asked me bluntly to tell them something interesting.

However, I had not outgrown my youth: the questions still embarrassed me. After saying that I didn't have anything to tell them, which was not strictly correct, I

began right away to talk to them, trying to approach the subject in a roundabout way. And what was the result? They listened eagerly, agreed with me and even praised me, but what good was that to me? I didn't want praise; I wanted them to embrace the cause completely and devote themselves once and for all to it; to stop working overtime evenings and nights, to read books, to study, to learn to be as zealous and persevering, as I tried to be. But not every man, especially one addicted to drink, was ready to give up everything else and concentrate on the fight for socialism.

And this is where I was mistaken in thinking that such people were unfit to be Party members. It is just impossible in the course of one fine day to change the outlook of the broad masses so radically that everyone becomes as markedly politically conscious as certain outstanding personalities. And yet those masses would, in time, take to revolutionary activity, although it was very difficult to say in advance, even an hour before, when this would take place.

One evening comes back to me vividly and clearly. It was one of those moments when the workers' life stands out in all its wretchedness, when it is hard to keep going, and not succumb to the whirlpool of emotions; to hang on grimly to the stone which you have gripped tightly in your hand, so as not to hurl it at something, even if only to break a window in a foreman's house. It is impossible to look on calmly in such a moment, and courage is needed to restrain one's mates from elemental acts of hatred against their oppressors.

The event took place on Christmas Eve, 1894. The works shut down two days before the holiday, and the workers, pay-books in their hands, went as usual home. No one was being particularly malevolent, although everyone was grumbling. And the reason was clear enough: the management were often guilty of holding up

the pay-out of wages, as had happened on the last two or three occasions.

When the factory whistle goes off at 3.30 on Saturday afternoon, the machinery stops and a sudden silence descends on the factory; it is the signal that work is over until Monday morning (it is unusual for anyone to work on after getting their pay). Any other day, as soon as the whistle blows the end of the shift, the workers stream out of the shops and hurry quickly towards the gates, some running, others darting from around corners. The guards, sighing and lamenting, run their searching hands mechanically over the workers' bodies; the packed crowd press down on them more strongly and the guards lose their tempers.

On Saturdays the workers leave more slowly, without fuss and in small groups. This is because most of the men have remained behind in the shop expecting to get their wages. Some who live close by, knowing that the porters have not arrived from town with the money, go off home to bolt their dinner and return quickly so as not to lose their turn in the queue. It's another story when a man lives a good distance away, because he can't go home until he's finished with the factory, settled various matters with his mates, and fulfilled any other obligation.

An hour passes, then another, and still no sign of the wages. Time drags on until late evening when the workers start to grumble at the management; however, they had gone home as soon as work finished, so there is no one even to ask when the wages will be paid and the grumbling becomes general. Finally about eight o'clock the porters come with the money, complaints can be heard on all sides; here and there some are cursing and threatening to throw things at the porters, though these are only scapegoats for the management.

Silently and swiftly the porters slip into the office and five or ten minutes later the pay-out begins and goes on sometimes until about half past ten. No wonder the workers are up in arms about it; they finish work at 3.30 in the afternoon, then sit around in the shop until ten o'clock doing nothing; after that they go home knowing that they can't go out that night, not even to get a bath. And besides, the management continues to abuse everybody, paying not the slightest attention to the workers' complaints.

This was the general state of affairs on Christmas Eve, 1894. On the day after the factory closed the workers gathered in mid afternoon to get their wages. They waited one, two, three hours, but no money in sight. The murmuring was general, some had nothing to buy food with, and "tomorrow, you see, how will we be able to get everything done in one day?" Others were going home to the village for Christmas, and now, "how will we manage?" By evening there was still no indication either of the money coming or about when it would be paid out.

A rumour started that the owner had gone bankrupt and there would be no wages for anybody. Many accepted this as true, and the rumour spread. Other similar stories were circulating, none of them promising the workers any good. Anxiety grew; the foremen were uneasy too; the workers were moving around restlessly, now into the shop and then out again.

In the street near the gates small groups of workers had formed; they were indignantly discussing the management and the wages, sprinkling their words with a goodly doze of hard cursing. It looked like growing into an ugly situation when, about 7 p.m., the management announced that wages would be paid at 10 o'clock on the following morning, that is to say, on Christmas Eve. Although everybody was furious about it, the appar-

ent certainty of the announcement toned down their anger. The men began to leave in groups, converging in a dense mass towards the gates. They dispersed quickly enough and stillness reigned in the works once more, until the following morning.

On the morning of Christmas Eve there was almost an exact repetition of the previous night's events. The day was wearing on into evening; dusk set in, it was a damp night, the street-lamps were lit, and candles were burning on the benches, on the machines, and on other places in the shop. Uneasy conversations could be heard everywhere. The people were in a ferment, they couldn't stay still, neither standing nor sitting, pacing from the shop to the yard, from the yard to the street, and from there back again into the shop.

I strode around from one group to another, listening to the talk, and now and then putting in a word on my own account. I came out into the yard, then into the street; there were people everywhere and it was obvious that some of them were strangers, that is, they were not our workers, but that didn't stop them from going into the factory, into the shops and back out again. Elbowing a way through the crowd in the street I turned back into the shop, when suddenly I heard a shout that a riot had broken out in the street.

Having just come from there and seen nothing of the kind, I was sceptical and said so, but nobody would believe me. People were making for the gates. I joined the rush towards the street. Near the gangway we ran into a very excited foreman who addressed us in a quivering voice. "Don't go into the street, boys, the money is coming, you'll be paid soon, please don't get excited, I beg you to be calm."

That was enough! His appeal dispelled any further doubts, the workers clattered down the gangway and dashed over to the gates. Behind us we could hear a few

voices shouting to us to come back—to keep out of trouble. They could have saved their breath since no one paid any attention to the advice. We gathered near the gates. Here a crowd of people were watching what was going on. It was impossible to get through the throng. The gatehouse was being smashed up. The glass and frames of the windows were in pieces; from the street, sticks and stones were flying at the lamps and at the tsarist eagle over the gates. The lamps were soon put out, the glass was in fragments and the double-headed eagle had also got a severe mauling. The rain of missiles ceased after this and we were able to venture into the street.

The gatehouse was all shambles: a kind of trophy in the eyes of an excited gang of young hotheads who had tried unsuccessfully to set it on fire. So there it stood like a scarecrow and no one would go near it for fear of being mistaken for a guard and beaten up; this saved it from total destruction.

The crowd's attention was now drawn to the other side of the factory where the lamps on the gates were still burning in spite of many efforts to put them out; the gatehouse was being left alone because its destruction would react seriously on the workers themselves—all their passports were lodged there.

Alongside the gatehouse was a long one-storey building where the mill manager lived; the workers hated him and here was a chance to teach him a lesson, but how to get at him? Attempts were made to force the door, but without success, so they decided to burn it down.

"Bring paraffin, quick!" came the demand from a number of men bustling around the front of the house, but there was no paraffin to be had. Pieces of lamp standards, broken in a vain attempt to get paraffin from the containers, bits of wood pulled off the roof and

various gatherings of waste timber were piled on the porch.

During all this commotion the street was packed tight with people; there wasn't room to drive a cab through, but a railway engine with three or four carriages attached was in motion all the time. Fearing an attack in which both the train crew and the passengers would suffer, the driver turned on full steam and crouched down below the window, not even looking where he was going, caring only to get past the mill.

This made the workers more furious and they began throwing anything they could lay their hands on at the train. I noticed one man especially who was deliberately smashing the carriage windows. He wielded a long stick and kept drumming away on the glass until it was nearly all gone. The passengers lay on the carriage floor to escape injury from stones and sticks. It's a miracle how the whole business did not end in a catastrophe. If someone had ventured to block the rails, a disaster would have been inevitable. If that had happened many innocent persons among the crowd would have come off very badly.

Simultaneously with the attack on the gatehouse a body of workers made for the general store which belonged to the factory. The store was a scourge on the workers' backs; here the customers had to endure the insults of not only the scoundrel who ran the store, but as much from his assistants. The customer couldn't get what he wanted for his money; he had to take what they gave him. This was particularly true of meat: if they gave you bones and you objected, you lost your job. Clearly, during such a protest movement, the general resentment against the store would come to the surface—and so the store was smashed up. Jars of jam were shattered, many other provisions spoiled, sugar

and tea scattered in the street, empty bottles and jars lay in pieces, and so on.

So in this way, as I said before, the gatehouse and all the books there were destroyed and attempts were made to force a way into the manager's house; he had locked himself and his family in, and was probably thinking that his life hung on a thread. Then came the unsuccessful effort to set the house on fire, the destruction of the store and its contents, and now they were smashing the windows of the main office and the director's office.

The building containing these offices was situated in the yard, its frontage facing the street. Lumps of coal were being flung through the windows. I lifted a piece myself but didn't throw it. Most of the wrath, however, had been directed against the store. Everybody rushed there, knocking one another over in the narrow streets and alleys. And it all happened in about half-an-hour.

The first sign of relief for the manager was the arrival of the fire-brigade attached to the local police-station; it drew up outside his house and put an end to any further action by the crowd at that point. Soon afterwards the Cossacks galloped up and stopped right outside the gates. Learning about the wrecking of the store they hastened there, but were hampered in their journey by the narrowness of the lanes leading to the store. The people around the store were trying to get away and had to pass the Cossacks. Some were able to get out of the way by jumping over the fence into the factory yard. Many people were arrested near the store, including some who had taken no part in the raid and were there merely out of curiosity.

General Paskin, the Firemaster of Petersburg, arrived soon after the firemen. He went up to the main office but it was locked. The office staff inside were scared out of their wits and were slow to admit the general. Not know-

ing what was up, he kept pressing the electric bell impatiently, and simultaneously trying to reassure a small group of about fifteen workers who were hanging around, that he was going to get the wages paid immediately.

The group insisted that they were not rioting but simply wanted their wages which the manager obviously did not want to pay. Finally, the door opened and the general ran up the stairs and into the office to find out the cause of the trouble. The crowd started to move towards the office and in about ten minutes more than fifty had gathered. Then the general ran down the stairs and came towards us. His face was flushed; he was obviously in a very bad temper. We supposed that he was far from satisfied with the explanation given to him by the office staff.

This did not prevent him, however, from expressing his shame at the wrecking of the gatehouse and the store, and he went on generally about our unlawful behaviour. One elderly man replied just as sharply, saying that the trouble was started not by the workers, but by the local rowdies who were the first to wreck the store. I said something, too, I don't remember what, and two or three others chipped in; then the general again appealed to us to be calm and not get excited, and as far as the money was concerned it would be brought immediately. The money, he said, had come already, but the porters had gone back to town out of fright; a special messenger had been sent to fetch them. Once more asking us to wait patiently for the money, the general hurried down to the gates and then to the factory store. About this time the Cossacks had come, and half-an-hour later the porters arrived with the money. While we were being paid simultaneously in all the shops, the management arrived and held some kind of extraordinary meeting in the office.

I was very interested to know what had set off the spark of the riot. The most credulous story had it that a boy had either been swearing or throwing something at a

factory guard. A policeman grabbed the boy and was instructed by his superior to take the lad into the gate-house. The crowd went to the boy's assistance, and then a brick was thrown at a window. This was the start of the riot. The guards pushed their way out of the crowd, hid themselves, or ran into the yard to get away from the enraged workers.

During the Christmas holidays mass arrests took place in the village of Smolenskoye, where our works was located; many were arrested for very doubtful reasons. Some were apprehended, for instance, because they had once quarrelled with an assistant in the store, or with a foreman. The majority were just picked up indiscriminately by the police, or because some unopened two-ounce or quarter-pound packets of tea and sugar were found when their houses were searched which was more than had been put against their accounts when they made their last purchases at the store.

In either case, among the arrested were many on whom no one would ever have cast a suspicion that they sympathized in any way with the revolutionary movement, or were even rebelliously inclined. All the arrested were kept in prison for a long time waiting their trial, and many of them were sentenced unmercifully.

During the holidays we discussed whether a leaflet should be issued about the riot. It was an opportune moment, and it was very necessary to put our point of view on the question. A fairly long leaflet was drafted and run off on the hectograph, then sewn into small "notebooks" and made ready for distribution. Now came the question—how to circulate them? I was entrusted with the task of organizing the circulation, though, to tell the truth, I didn't know how to go about it myself.

It wouldn't do just to place them in the lockers; someone might notice it being done. Besides, it was the first of such leaflets and we had not made a great number of

them. I don't remember now whether it was Saturday or Monday when I left some of them in the lavatories and got rid of the rest as best I could; I pushed some through broken windows into the shops, or left them in doors, in boilers and in engine cabins; in other words, I tried to make sure that a few went into each of the shops.

On the other side of the mill, the distribution of the leaflets also went off well; here and there they were found in tool-boxes and behind the rollers, where the workers were in the habit of sitting during breaks. The distribution was not so difficult as it had appeared at first; actually it was simple and easy, but naturally, as it was my baptism, so to speak, I could not help feeling nervous.

Whether it was because we had too few to distribute, or whether they were issued too soon after the riot, or maybe there was some other reason, but the leaflets did not rouse any excitement, and we were at a loss to know what the workers thought about them. A leaflet found in one shop was handed to the foreman, who, without any justification, began to upbraid an old worker who had long since abandoned such ideas. It was a pity that the old man had to listen to these unfair accusations, but as I explained to him later, we just had to put the leaflets into his shop at the same time as the others. The experience in distributing this material was useful in spite of the apparent lack of results. Later on we circulated a similar kind of leaflet in the workshops of the Petersburg port; it had a much better reception there than in the Semyannikov works.

After the holiday we resumed our study group, which was held every Sunday in my room, and our attendance at the school. In addition, P. I. came regularly to see us in the evenings and continued his readings. All in all, our time was fully taken up with educational work.

We had some strange experiences in the study circles, as, for instance, when we were having a discussion with

one of the Social-Democratic members of the intelligentsia. The door opened and a head appeared, withdrew and appeared again, this time the whole of the man came into the room. The lecturer broke off his discourse; the newcomer asked one of the leading workers to come out with him, which he did. It appeared that the visitor was one of the People's Will members, ill at ease for having come when the circle was in progress.

It is clear from this incident that the differences were not very sharp at that time, indeed Social-Democrats and members of the People's Will could be found in one and the same study circle; this was partly explained by the fact that some of the students used to attend circles under the direction of the People's Will. Finally, the People's Will members gave up attending our circles, because they were not given new ones to teach and they were quite unable to win over any of our students.

At that time there was a young girl with us and a woman whose husband was in exile; they often expressed the wish to attend our study group or readings given by the intelligentsia: as I said before, we had a separate group reading Cannan. This reading group was attended usually by five or six men who lived in the flat, and possibly two more from outside; so the question was raised, will there not be too many for the size of the room? However, that question was not hard to answer.

Then I posed the question: would the presence of attractive members of the opposite sex not have a retarding effect on our studies? This question raised some fears; one student went as far as to say that he could not answer for himself if things were going to be complicated in that way. This view was expressed by one of the manufacturing workers who had a liking for alcohol. In view of all this, however, it was decided not to admit females to the study circles, though they did visit us now and then. This was the first time in my life that I

had faced such a question. I'm sure that next time it will not be decided so unsatisfactorily.

F. A. visited us quite often. He was a very pleasant and likeable worker, old in revolutionary experience. I always listened to him with a special interest and accepted his advice. To me he was one of that generation whose example we were to follow, although I doubted whether we could ever be as resolute, as strong and as capable as they were. I was very depressed when he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment in the fortress. I will never forget this wonderful person, who had already, one might say, lost most of his life and was now back again in prison, feeding the voracious appetite of the absolute monarchy.

He complained to me once that we never sang songs, whereas in earlier days they sang often, and knew many songs. It was true; we as yet sing and know very few good songs.

This is how we lived and progressed. By this time we had made many new friends among the workers. The days were passing unnoticed and spring drew near. I recall that some trouble arose about then between the squad foreman and myself, first because I would not work overtime and then simply because he wanted to be rid of me. My independent attitude did not please him and he took umbrage, particularly during the last period, in that, as he said, I had spoiled a young lad who worked in our squad and whom he wished to train in his own fashion. This senseless fight wound up one fine day when I was transferred to another and worse squad in which I worked for little more than a month.

There was a rush job on; the whole squad was told to work that night. Several of us asked to be excused; we were threatened with the sack, but even then I refused to work on. The foreman was furious and suspended us for two weeks, i.e., we were not permitted to work for a fort-

night and if we wanted to get our job back after the interval we had to agree to work overtime. This was one of the methods used to make the workers more amenable.

When I got the note suspending me I went right away to the factory inspector, who, thinking he could put me off, stormed and raged that it was all my fault and not the management's. I insisted that I had come to him for protection and not for abuse, or to hear him lay all the blame on me. He quietened down, saying that he had forbidden the practice several times and still there were complaints about it. He promised to sort the matter out when he came to the works. The result was that the foreman was reprimanded and I was given two weeks wages for the time lost. The case caused a lot of stir in the works, and for a time I was looked on as a kind of hero for having bested a foreman; another result was that evening and night overtime was stopped temporarily.

Then the situation changed. I had made up my mind to get out of that district and go somewhere else, but when I was reinstated I remained where I was and continued activity. Soon afterwards I had to change my room, where I had stayed for a long time without attracting the attention of the police. The study group continued at my new place.

Summer arrived, the circle closed down, the intelligentsia departed on their various ways and it seemed as if the labour movement was ceasing to exist. But this was more apparent than real, instead of shrinking it was widening out, but now our activity, in view of the absence of the intelligentsia, took on its own peculiar form.

That summer another general meeting of Petersburg workers was held. The meeting took place on the right bank of the Neva behind the Thornton factory, somewhat to the left in the woods. The main point of concern was the lull in the movement and that it was necessary in some way to lift it to a higher level. Complaints were reg-

istered that the study groups were not enough; something more was needed, something as yet untried and on a broader scale. Argument and debate waxed long and strong.

Two young workers, in particular, attacked all and sundry, condemning everything and reproaching the workers for being indifferent to new ideas. On the whole the meeting was rather boisterous.

It was here that a suggestion was made to send a wreath to be placed on the grave of Engels who had just died. Some were for sending it but the majority were against. The objectors declared that our movement was still fairly weak and it would give a wrong impression if we were to send a wreath in the name of all the Petersburg workers. Besides, we would have to sacrifice a comrade and we could not afford this. In any case we were too late with our wreath; there might have been some point in it on the day of the funeral, but not after it was over. It would be better to think of another way to pay tribute to Engels than sending a wreath—as if he were a baron or a duke.

This view was finally accepted and then someone spoke about sending a telegram but I don't remember now what the decision was. However, we all left the meeting unanimous that we should have to find new methods of propaganda and activate it more. But it was a lot easier to say this than do it. We had as yet only hectographed leaflets; we were compelled to narrow the scope of revolutionary questions to those most familiar to the workers and leading comrades in the given locality or district, or even in the circle. This is true of the outlying districts and the provinces where the workers live in the most unenlightened and oppressive conditions without any help from the intelligentsia.

About this time six or seven of us used to spend Sundays down the Neva reading and discussing a book we

brought with us, or exchanging opinions and going over events in the workshops. We were preparing for the autumn, and hoping to set up several new study groups; we were taking note of likely people to enrol. We had a fund of our own; it had no definite rules and it is hard to recall how the money was distributed and spent. I know that a good portion of it was spent on books but there was never any mention of an outlay on illegal literature. We set up a fairly satisfactory library of legal books.[1] The tutors gave us many books; we bought some ourselves and P. I. regularly brought books to me. Many valuable books, made up of articles from various journals, were lost.

Subsequently, I always felt keenly about the lack of books; only then did I value them as precious things, and come to understand how valuable good books can be in a town where the workers have to get on as best they can without help from the intelligentsia—this is where books can be excellent guides. Now new times and new songs: literature of all kinds penetrates and must penetrate everywhere, periodicals, illegal literature, all playing a leading part in many spheres. For a worker who finds himself in some isolated spot, access to such literature is a kind of sheet-anchor.

The autumn of 1895 began; the intelligentsia returned from all parts and the movement took on a new lease of life. The intelligentsia were anxious to get down to work, the more so that some of them had been censured for abandoning the workers for the whole summer. They were all impatience to make up for the summer stagnation (though, to tell the truth, there had been nothing stagnant about it). The machinery was set in motion everywhere; winter had not yet come, but the circles were getting together, meeting on Sundays in groups of five or six with

[1] N. K. Krupskaya was in charge of the library.—*Ed.*

a tutor from the intelligentsia. There was a great shortage of accommodation; all the rooms at our disposal were being used; one room had been rented specially for studies and meetings.

The question of agitation was decided in a positive way, though personally I was not satisfied with it. I was partly opposed to agitational work, being afraid that this would lead to the break up of the circles, that our studies would be completely submerged in agitational activity, but then I, and others who were of the same opinion, did not see how fruitful this activity would be. Nevertheless, the circles continued to function and I was asked to set up still more of them. We were waiting for the distribution of a leaflet, which was almost ready to come out.

Round about this time the police began to watch my movements—and not mine alone. The explanation for this became clear later. One of the workers who had received illegal books from me gave one of them to his sister; her father noticed her with the book and informed the gendarmes. Hence the watch on myself, but it was obviously not having any results, and although it was a portent of my impending arrest, I continued my activity, but with greater care than usual so as not to act as guide to the gendarmes and be a danger to other comrades.

In the factory itself the illegal books still circulated, but now I had it arranged through one of my comrades. Disputes were then taking place in the Thornton cloth factory, mainly around the question of reduced price-lists. It was desirable to express in the leaflets what interested the workers themselves, and to set out clearly the demands that would be, in fact, the demands of the majority of the elected leaders, who were not attached to any socialist organization.

For this purpose, a meeting of these leading workers was convened in one of the flats used for illegal work;

one of the intelligentsia came to talk to them and find out their state of mind.

The discussion came to nothing because the Thornton workers would not talk to a stranger; they suspected a trap, and nothing would convince them otherwise; all they asked for was that a well-worded petition be drawn up to be presented by them to the governor of the town. But to write a snivelling petition was not what the Party wanted and it would be useless to expect any good to come from such an appeal. In view of this, material collected by one of the Thornton workers was made into a leaflet, to the mutual satisfaction of the worker concerned and ourselves. It was printed and distributed in many copies throughout the factory. This was the beginning of a period of energetic agitational work.

Soon after this a leaflet was distributed in the Putilov works, and a copy sent to me in the Nevsky Gate district for my information. During working hours a comrade went into the lavatory with the leaflet and a bottle of gum arabic. He waited till the place was empty, poured some gum on his hand, plastered it on the wall, stuck on the leaflet and went out quickly. After a lapse of some fifteen minutes he could contain himself no longer, and returned to see what had happened to the leaflet.

About fifteen workers were gathered round it; one was trying to read it aloud, but he wasn't doing so well. Our comrade pushed his way to the front and in a loud staccato voice read the leaflet to the men, who were all pleased with it. From then on the lavatory was crowded out; the reading never stopped; everyone who read it went out and invited others to go in.

This continued for the best part of two hours, until practically everyone was familiar with the contents of the leaflet. Finally the management got to know and gave instructions to remove it, but as there was still a crowd

in the lavatory when the guard came, he was afraid to touch it, as were several other unfriendly elements.

The incident convinced me and other comrades of the value of this form of activity, and leaflets and pamphlets began to appear more often in the lavatories, in the least noticeable place, from where they disappeared shortly afterwards. Obviously someone came in, took the leaflet down and went off with it, but it was done so carefully that even we did not see it. We kept a close look-out, however, and finally noticed a man going in inconspicuously, putting the leaflet carefully up his sleeve and going out again almost immediately.

At the beginning of winter a meeting of the elected representatives took place, with six or so workers present. A draft leaflet was read at the meeting; it was to be hectographed and distributed round all the factories and mills just as soon as a number of corrections were made to it. We were informed that these meetings would take place regularly, not less than once a fortnight, and that the intelligentsia would be represented by the person who had read out the leaflet at the meeting.

It can be seen from this that our organization was taking on newer and newer forms more adaptable to agitational work, but at the same time we had necessarily to work under cover. Part of the intelligentsia had been selected to draft leaflets and maintain contact with the workers on the more conspiratorial and organizational questions: another group was allocated for work in the study circles, but, of course, who was doing what work, was not for me to know. The important thing was that both workers and intelligentsia were extremely busy.

Notwithstanding the sudden change in our activity—from working exclusively in the study groups to agitation—no particular differences or disputes arose among us.

The circles, by continuing to function more energetically, were fitting into the new state of affairs and main-

taining a correct balance with agitation, and this brought us the greatest satisfaction. When the study circles had been neglected, under the stress of agitational work, a questionable and dangerous course had been taken, which was justly and sharply condemned by all the thinking workers. Such a practice failed to bring forward advanced workers and at the same time affected the intelligentsia who, without the study circles, were themselves not developing, and were less in touch with the moods of the workers.

Just a year before, I was completely absorbed in trying to assimilate the variety of excellent lectures and instruction given by the intelligentsia and by the teachers in the school, and attending meetings from time to time, still nervous and shy of talking. Now I was compelled by necessity to act independently, because we had to decide all sorts of questions on our own, whether they were raised in the study groups, in the factories and mills, or in the school.

Sometimes I felt not quite competent to lead the work, but again I was speaking, advising, and explaining, only because the best and most capable leaders had been banished: suddenly the responsibility of leadership was put on me and I just had to accept it. I don't suggest that I never made mistakes, but having no one to guide me it was difficult to keep a regular check on myself. However, I put all my energy and foresight into the work.

One evening after work I went to the Narvsky Gate district on business and met some of the local leaders in their homes; the people there had a reputation of being smart, others looked up to them, and they themselves encouraged such an attitude. But what did I find? My impression of them was not at all in their favour. I had every desire to see and hear something new from them, something I could accept and use in the Nevsky Gate district to improve our work, but, to say the least of it, I found

nothing fresh. My hopes in them as people whose example I should follow, shrank considerably, so I decided to redouble my efforts in my own locality, still not knowing very much about the work in other areas.

I was thoroughly acquainted with all that went on in the whole of the Nevsky Gate district, and because of this, I had a very clear picture of the lift in the movement following the distribution of the leaflets and pamphlets, which were scattered on a wide scale over the whole area. The leaflets and pamphlets we received were distributed very successfully in the mills and factories; no one was caught at it, which, needless to say, was very gratifying, and we waited eagerly for more and still more literature for the masses.

This activity livened up things so much that rumours spread in the factories that rebellion was imminent. "Everyone here is saying that a revolt will take place after the New Year," I was told by a rank and file factory worker who took no part whatever in our affairs.

Another worker asked me outright for more literature, saying he knew that I gave out a lot of it in my own factory, but that they had very little. I could not give him any literature because he was a complete stranger to whom I had never spoken before. I talked to him, asking his opinion about something or other, as I was anxious to know the views of a rank and filer who had never belonged to any organization. The suggestion had been made at that time that we should mix more with the other workers, to learn what they were really thinking; so that such people were to me representatives of the masses.

I think it is necessary to say something about the intelligentsia who taught in our study circles. P. I. came very seldom that winter, and then mostly to me, but he got two others to accept responsibility for the study cir-

cles, a task they fulfilled as people devoted to the cause; they became very popular with the students.

There was one group which demanded insistently to have a study circle; after long negotiations a tutor was found but in place of getting down to their studies in a conspiratorial manner, they came in groups thus attracting attention to themselves and spent their time, not so much on education, as on a variety of irrelevant questions and criticism of all and sundry. First the tutor and then the students complained constantly about the uselessness of such studies.

A third and the biggest group of the intelligentsia was preparing the work of agitation and kept itself well informed on all Petersburg affairs. This group had to lead the agitational activity, i.e., draft the leaflets and pamphlets and arrange for their distribution. Workers were responsible locally for the delivery of the literature to all the mills and factories. In each factory and mill there was only one such worker who alone knew how many leaflets were needed, to whom they should be given, and the day on which the leaflets would be distributed. The two groups mentioned above were making an attempt, directly through us, to amalgamate, but did not succeed because of mass arrests.

The raids took place about December the 5th; the intelligentsia and some of the better known workers were picked up. This had been expected, but not so soon and not on such a large scale. Naturally, the raids and arrests affected me very much, though not so strongly as they would have done if they had taken place earlier. I was now more used to them and took them fairly calmly.

In school, the women-teachers were near to tears, their faces expressing their alarm, more for the cause, than for themselves. The general effect of the arrests was serious: the work of providing literature and leaflets ceased; in a

number of districts revolutionary activity came to an end; these places had to be rewon, but as yet we had not the strength to do it. Some of the study circles were closed down, partly in our area too.

Three of our workers were arrested; the most serious loss for us was N. Nevertheless, we were able to go on with our activity which was not affected by any loss of workers in the factories and mills; we missed most of all the intelligentsia, but we could not put this right quickly. However, in the course of a week we managed to resume our meetings and re-establish our connections.

At this time the comrades had to go all out to break my stubborn opposition to the continuation of agitational work. Although I saw its fruitful results in the increased militancy of the workers in the mills and factories, I was very apprehensive of a new round of arrests which would sink everything—but here I made a mistake. If I had been sure that the work would continue after my arrest I would not have argued about the matter.

I could not help wondering why they had left me at large; apparently they had done so in the sordid hope that they would discover my connections, but they didn't succeed. Meanwhile the comrades finally wore me down and I agreed to recommence agitational work.

To demonstrate the strength of our organization we distributed several pamphlets in the iron-foundry and in the Pal and Maxwell factories; they were entitled "Our Life and Theirs," "What Every Worker Should Know and Remember," "The Congress," and another the title of which I can't recollect. These were distributed in fairly large quantities and caused quite a sensation.

The police and gendarmes kept on the move, but this only encouraged us; faith and fortitude were instilled in our readers in the factories and mills. There were many discussions and arguments; it looked as if the wave of discontent would soon rock the boat. Although the polit-

ical activity of the school was stopped at this time, the chief foreman of the Maxwell factory, Shults, blamed the school outright as the cause of all the trouble and kept a vigilant eye on his workers.

Many of the workers in this factory had been arrested or had their names taken for reading the literature distributed in the factory. Most interesting was the fact that the material was disposed of during work by our comrades whose daring was something to marvel at. Yet none were ever noticed doing it even by their fellow workers in the squad, although only one man distributed for a whole shop, sometimes throwing a leaflet into a boiler where three or four men were working.

These workers never hurried to see who was responsible, but turned wonderingly to the leaflet and then realizing what it was, began carefully to read it, sometimes destroying it afterwards, but this happened very rarely and only with the most timid workers.

On one occasion leaflets were not put around the Semyannikov works because of a mysterious happening. A worker, who had received the leaflets in the evening, hid them in the factory till morning, but when he came to work next day and went to fetch them they were gone. After this we had to be more careful, but right up until my arrest we never had an explanation of the missing leaflets, nor were they returned to us.

In less than a month we had circulated a respectable number of leaflets and pamphlets, but even this roused some differences and resentment, some workers complaining that another factory received more than theirs. Of course this happened; there were not enough to go round, but I was confident that the deficiency would soon be overcome and then we could distribute them more widely in the factories.

There were various methods of disposing of the literature in the factories: some were placed inside tool-

boxes, or stuck under the supports of the lathes; a few were thrust into coat pockets, a very easy and simple method, or laid in a spot where workers passed frequently on some errand; often in the boiler shop they were put inside the boilers. We also found it convenient to throw leaflets into various parts of railway engines under repair, where they were found sometimes several hours after work had commenced.

At this time, beginning from the Obvodnoy Canal near the chapel by the bridge where there was a small mill, right through the whole of Alexandrovskoye village, there was not a single large mill or factory which was not covered by our illegal literature. This was owing to the fact that we had our own people in all of them, particularly in the Pal and Maxwell factories. Even if we lost one or two people from these places, the work would continue uninterruptedly; generally after a month the loss would be made up. All that was needed was a good leader.

Two or three weeks after mass arrests our connections were readjusted; our work went on briskly everywhere, in the circles and in our agitational activity with the leaflets and pamphlets.

About four weeks after the mass arrests I described above, I received a good many leaflets of a general character dealing with the gendarmes' raids and the weapons used by the government in their fight against the class-conscious workers.

On receiving the leaflets I had the feeling that they would be the last I'd distribute for some time. I divided them in accordance with the number of workers in each factory or mill, then took them to the persons concerned and learned at what time, approximately, they would be distributed. These trusted comrades took them into work; they fetched the materials to make glue or gum arabic to fix the leaflets in the most frequented places.

Having handed over the leaflets and bid the comrades

farewell, I warned them that I might be arrested soon, that they must not come near my lodgings, and that I would get in touch with them if need be.

About eleven o'clock that evening I boarded the horse-tram going through the park to Alexandrovskoye village and went directly to a flat where my comrades were waiting for me. I gave them leaflets for the Obukhovsky factory and other works, wished them success in their future work. After mentioning that I expected to be arrested I went home calmly, but knowing full well that by next morning the leaflets would be in all the mills and factories along the whole Schlüsselburg Highway. And of course they were.

The police went into action to discover the culprits responsible for the leaflets and quite a few non-participants fell under suspicion.

The day passed; it was evening and I had not been out, staying at home to prepare for the raid; I was so sure of it. And true enough I had just fallen asleep when I heard an alarming knock at the door. The puzzled landlord went impatiently to open the door and I knew that my work in the Nevsky Gate district was over.

A police officer appeared in the doorway, and following him, full of smooth apologies and with the dignity worthy of a fox, came the liberal police official, Agafonov, saying that he had come only to search the room. But after a most careful scrutiny, when he had found nothing incriminating, he told me, in his mealy-mouthed way, that he would have to take me along, but that I'd probably be released after a couple of days. Of course, I was ready for it, so the news did not affect me very much.

When the lamps were being extinguished on the Petersburg streets that morning, together with another person they had arrested, I was taken to the remand prison to await trial. I learned that the man who was sitting beside me had been arrested for something rather unusual; he

had found an illegal book in his pocket, took it to the gatehouse and handed it to the gendarmes, who immediately arrested him.

Sometimes a thing like that was enough to convince the gendarmes of a person's guilt. I knew also that others who were arrested had as little to do with the leaflet distribution as the young man sitting beside me. And I was also sure that those who had in fact put out the leaflets were sleeping peacefully in their own beds.

Finally we arrived at the remand prison. It was an imposing building which filled me with hatred as soon as I saw it, but I was to make its closer acquaintance and get used to its ways and regulations, gaining much experience during the thirteen months and more that I spent there. For all that time I was unable to exchange one intimate word with my comrades who were right alongside me in prison, and who, like me, maintained a deathlike silence as those long months dragged on.

With this end my recollections of our activity in the Nevsky Gate district.

II

At the beginning of spring, 1897, I was deported to Yekaterinoslav. After thirteen months in the Petersburg prison, it was a very enjoyable experience to travel through practically the whole of Russia as a free man, but it was more pleasing still to be in a southern town when spring was in the air. Everything seemed new and the people strange, unlike those who remained behind—far away in the northern capital. The severe prison walls were no longer an eyesore; here one breathed freely and easily—and over there the wide steppeland drew to itself a man without employment.

Arriving at my destination, there were certain formalities to go through: I had to place myself under the vigilant eye of the local police and had the satisfaction of listening to an irascible police chief grumbling at me for having selected that particular town to serve my exile, and promising he would not feed me on honey but on something else. I had to wait for my documents being sent from Petersburg, after which I had to get a residential permit. While waiting, I got to know a little about living and working conditions there and about the chances of securing employment, the wages paid and hours worked. I learned about the latter from the landlord of the flat where I had taken a room; he was a Jewish worker employed as a hammerman.

Many new factories were being built, so I felt sure that I would get work fairly easily, and waited patiently for the document permitting me to stay.

Three weeks went by before the papers arrived; I had to appear before the secretary of the police department for the special permit. He wrote out the permit and handed it to me; I gave it to the assistant police chief for his signature and left the police office hoping that I'd never see the place again. However, the permit turned out to be completely unsatisfactory and puzzled both the passport officials and the landlords of flats. All this caused me endless trouble; my efforts to get a satisfactory permit met with no success, so I reconciled myself to living there without one.

At the very beginning of my stay in Yekaterinoslav I had been expecting the arrival of a person whom I had arranged to meet on one of the town squares. I was there at the appointed hour, but to my great regret he didn't show up. It appeared later that he had not come at all to Yekaterinoslav, but that he had been given permission, after a lot of trouble, to go to another town. So the one hope I had of making contact with someone I knew and

who had the same outlook as myself, was shattered. Anyone else I knew did not share my views, so it is no wonder I began to get lonely and, to make things worse, I could not find a job.

My resources were coming to an end and the future looked gloomy. Rising at about 5 a. m. I went to a factory, but there was always a large crowd of unemployed outside the gates. Sometimes I spoke to several of them on the edge of the crowd, and other times I went right in and mingled with them. The majority of them were from the countryside, mainly from the Orlov province.

They had countrymen in the works, and hoped to get work with their help, and in most cases they were successful; I often saw men coming out of work who a day or two back had been standing with me at the gates. I had no friends inside and my attempts to get work through the director or a foreman were turned down.

In my second month in Yekaterinoslav, one morning the landlord coming off the night-shift, brought in a fellow worker who was a bit tight. The new arrival, calling me comrade, bade me get out of bed, which was just a thin mattress on the floor, and took me along to his own flat. Here I met two workers from Petersburg who had come in the same way as myself.

One of my new friends was a skilled worker in a pattern-shop, and the other an apprentice, already in his twenties. I liked this lad very much; he had a simple nature and I enjoyed his stories, which he told willingly and with great gusto, about his experiences during the Petersburg strikes and the part he had played. He gave me the first detailed news of the broad wave of strikes that had spread through all the Petersburg factories. Then I realized that the agitational work had not been in vain and that the Maxwell factory worker who had forecast a rebellion for certain after the New Year had not been far wrong. If it was not a rebellion, it was a strike,

a sign that the workers ideas had undergone a profound change during this period.

And this ordinary lad (we'll call him Matyukha) was a typical worker. He had had only a very elementary education in a village school, and at first found it difficult to read the leaflets distributed in the factory; later he himself was to take an active part in the distribution of the leaflets and in the strike preparation. Now in exile, his one regret was for his arrested comrades, that this might retard the movement and dampen down the fervour of the Petersburg strike movement.

Matyukha attracted me very much because I saw in him one who answered all my requirements both in words and deeds. I felt a special pride in being with him; my loneliness disappeared and only now and then did I remember that I was still unemployed. I was assured, however, that I would soon be fixed up in the same works as the man who had knocked me up that morning in the flat.

I learned later that at one time a number of workers of different trades had been sent from Petersburg to fill key jobs in the local factories. They had to pay their own fares and had no special privileges at work, when they realized that they had been fooled, they considered going back to Petersburg, but having no money they were compelled to stay on; then they were gradually drawn into local life and forgot all about Petersburg.

I made many friends with my countrymen and comrades in arms and visited them often, inviting them likewise to my place and lending them books from those I had brought with me. Life flowed on more smoothly.

One evening I was told to go to the works next morning for a trial. This was very pleasant news. In the morning, feeling a bit nervous, I went off bursting to start work. After twenty months away from intensive work I had good reason to be apprehensive and waited anx-

iously for the trial job. The foreman was an Italian who knew no Russian; the comrade who was speaking for me introduced me to him.

The Italian, twisting a cigar in his mouth, looked me over in silence, obviously sizing me up and making his own conclusions. About ten minutes later I got the test job, that is, a job which I would have to turn out as good as possible, in order that the foreman who would examine it could estimate my qualifications, and on this basis decide the wages. I put everything I had into the task, and filing steel is hard enough work. Two hours went by, the job was moving on, but to my great surprise and sorrow I felt that I was not in a fit state to finish it and began to lose heart.

The fact was that long before going to prison I had not worked with a file and thirteen months in jail had completely spoiled my hands for that kind of work. They were too soft; it was difficult to find even one callus on them, and of course this is a worker's armour-plating, protecting him from cuts and the friction of steel on the skin that would make a non-worker suffer. I had not yet reached the end of the second hour when I felt a severe pain on the palm of my right hand; I tried not to pay attention to it and continued to work, but my hand was sorely blistered and held me back.

In this shop there was a Petersburg worker who had just started to work there after being a year in the fortress and was now no longer under police surveillance. He knew I was from Petersburg and still under police control, and that I had just arrived in Yekaterinoslav. After exchanging a few words we understood one another and I told him my troubles; he expressed his sympathy and advised me to throw it up but I said no, and went on with my work.

When the blister burst and the fluid came out I felt more hopeful about finishing the job; I wound a handker-

chief round my hand and kept going. But it was useless, my hand had lost its strength. I had to hold the file in an unusual way and this dragged out the work still more. I worked away, every moment wishing more and more to pack it in. I asked the Italian's interpreter if they would let me come back and finish the job in two or three days' time; he put my request to the Italian, who seemed to think that I was scared of the trial and therefore unable to work.

Knowing what was in his mind I showed him my hand as the reason why I couldn't work; he believed me and said something to the interpreter, who conveyed to me that the foreman thought I was too weak for their type of work, that I would be paid for the work done and that I was not required any more.

What objection could I make? Of course none, and, therefore, feeling bitterly downcast, I took the 80 kopeks (the daily wage was one ruble twenty kopeks) and went home in despair, my spirits down to rock bottom. "How can I hope to get another job now?" I thought. "I'll have to go through another test job, with more blisters, and again I'll be rejected as a person too weak to work in a metal factory." I tried to find some way to harden my hands but I could think of nothing that would do it. My hand ached for about two weeks; then I tried twisting a stick in my hand in the hope of raising calluses but I got tired of this and gave it up.

One day, when I was on the platform of the railway station, I met an acquaintance of mine from Petersburg, one of those who attended the general meetings of the Petersburg workers. We were pleased to see each other and got to talking right away; evidently we had both been in Yekaterinoslav three months but had not known about each other, and only an accidental meeting brought us together, awakening our recollections of the times spent in the remand prison, and other things of mutual interest.

We were both under the same conditions of police control, and would be freed from their tutelage at the same time. We spoke about various matters; I mentioned my friendship with the Petersburg workers and promised to take him to them. Just then we ran into the Petersburg worker I had met during the test job and he invited us to his flat.

There were now three of us and soon we became fast friends. Finally I managed to get a job in the Bryansk works, while my old Petersburg friend took a job as a foreman in a small works and he was able very quickly to take on the other comrade, and later Matyukha, so we all felt a lot better off. Then we came across another worker from Petersburg, exiled for two years and employed in another works. As we were seeing a lot of each other we decided to rent a room; two of the comrades and I went to live there.

Just then I had some differences with the foreman who wanted to impose a fine on me; I said that I would not pay it. The affair ended up in a general fight with the result that I was sacked after only two weeks' work. During the short time I was in this place I met one of the best and most sensible of men, G. (G. I. Petrovsky.—*Ed.*) G. had attracted my attention for some time; we had many a long talk making us feel we were back in Petersburg.

At this time, too, Matyukha introduced me to a man well up in years and with a large family, a good workman who was influenced by the ideas of co-operative socialism. His ideal was to open a store which he thought would develop into a good, solid and strong business with means at its disposal to fight capitalism. Like all enthusiasts the old fellow was completely taken up with the idea of opening a store and spoke to me often on the subject.

I had set myself the task of seeking out all the former members of the existing organization and then to start doing something; meanwhile I continued to widen my contacts and this proved to be not so difficult. I started a study group on Sundays to impart some of my own knowledge to a number of young people that G. had got together. It is true that he too needed all-round education and came to me in the evenings for this purpose; our main obstacle was my old well-known enemy—overtime.

Although I could see that G. was exhausted by working overtime, I could not insist on his giving up the continual night work because he still needed more training as a skilled worker. Besides, he was worried to death by domestic problems which demanded all he could get in the way of wages. He was to be one of my main assistants in our future work.

As I said already, after three months in Yekaterinoslav, the possibility of getting into a metal factory still eluded me; I could not make the contacts that would help; altogether my mood was such that I didn't feel like hurling myself at once into the whirlpool of events.

Making closer acquaintance with my new friends and attending our study circle, which was fairly lively and cheery, we did not notice that the summer was over. It was now autumn. Since I was out of work, I recalled the evening schools in Petersburg, and could not put up with it any longer; so I enrolled in evening classes to learn draughtsmanship and drawing. My friends enrolled too, but it was a rather heavy burden for a man with a big family. The school was forty minutes' walk from the flat; this was not an attractive proposition after a hard day's work. My comrades soon gave up; I continued alone and might have gone on longer had the school been interesting, but for me, a Petersburg worker who had gone

through the Sunday school in the Nevsky Gate district, it was far from satisfactory.

Besides the old man, there was another I will refer to as D., who came often to our room for discussions. D. became acquainted with us in some way I can't remember, and he visited us fairly frequently. I did not like him particularly, but of course I never said so.

I had many conversations with these new friends. The old man took full advantage of my sympathy, but as our flat was known to the police, he was diffident about talking, and when saying good-bye he always invited me to come to his flat. I did go to see him several times, but I never felt at home. Sometimes when I came he would be talking with his wife, a stout, flabby woman. After greeting me, he would invite me into the front room, sternly ordering out the children playing there and shutting the door. When the two of us were alone we had to keep our voices low, or whisper, so that neither the neighbours nor his own family could hear a word of our conversation.

Sometimes one of the family would come into the room accidentally; the old man would swear, put them out and hook the door. We talked about books, socialism, factory problems and anything else we could think about. He told me about the earlier developments in Kharkov where he lived for a long time until he had to get out. From him I learned about people who could be trusted, about others who might be useful, and about some dangerous people, too. In a word, I tried to get everything useful out of him. In these talks he often related how he concealed even his legal books, so that no one would suspect him.

Of course, I realized that such a person would be of little use in the modern labour movement: he was too old to change, but it was desirable to find him something to do, so that he would not lose contact with the movement altogether. In certain circumstances people like him can

be of service to the movement, although, of course, one should not trail behind them, but should lead them, even if they are only limping and hobbling along, and then no harm will come to the cause. This is what I tried to do with the old man, and our friendship continued to grow.

Not long afterwards I met another elderly worker, a bit younger in years, who seemed to be a man with a plan and a purpose which, in my view, were very utopian and completely impracticable; but what's the use of destroying a person's ideal if you can't replace it by a better one?

This is how my circle of friends came more closely together in the second six months of my stay in Yekaterinoslav. D. continued to visit us and seemed to be very curious about our affairs; he often annoyed me, and I sometimes asked the comrades, what exactly is he after, what does he want from us, if all he does is to ask questions and never volunteer any information about himself? If he is anxious to be accepted in good faith he should be a little more frank!

Finally, I decided to put the question to him bluntly, but I never got round to it.

My comrade told me that D. had given him a pamphlet, I don't remember which one exactly. We agreed to read it, but since our room was not very suitable we repaired to the flat of the old comrade from Petersburg. There was a vacant room there so we sat down and read the pamphlet through. This was the first illegal article we had read during my six-to-seven-months' stay in Yekaterinoslav, which shows just how weak the illegal work was in the town at that time. Then other pamphlets appeared; I was desperate to read them, and held on to them tenaciously. After this our friendship with D. became more intimate and we had many talks with him, exchanging recollections about Petersburg.

D. then proposed that we get together for a discussion. The other comrades and I agreed willingly. That same week four of us met in a room where the question was put of the need to unite our forces, make our presence felt by activity, and prepare to collect material from the factories, mainly on the burning issues of the day.

In order that the matter might not be shelved we decided to start there and then. We also agreed that each of us would not only collect material but write a leaflet for the factory in which he worked. These leaflets would be read at the next meeting; if they were thought suitable they would be hectographed and distributed. At this meeting we decided also that because we did not have a great deal to do it would be enough if only three of us met to lead the work; I was one of those selected, and from then until the happy day of my departure from Yekaterinoslav two years and some months later, I was a regular member of the leading committee.

Our meetings were held more often, the two members of the intelligentsia who were responsible for all the technical work kept in constant touch with us, attended our meetings, or came with leaflets, or on some other business. I remember that right from the beginning our relations were based on mutual respect. D. and I, who were workers, and the two intellectuals, took an active part in the organization. D. turned out to be a rather experienced man with a long record of activity, but, most important of all, he was very accurate and painstaking in observing the rules of conspiracy. I also had some experience in Petersburg, and knew how best to act. The intellectuals lacked firmness, were very temperamental, but such traits would really do more harm to themselves than they would to us—workers.

As far as I know, before the creation of our organization, which laid the basis for broad agitational work in all the workshops, there was another, older organization

of a craft type, which did not show itself very clearly in activity. On the other hand, before we went over to active work, we drew up a plan of action; for this purpose we had to establish contact with many factories, even with those in Kamenskoye, a town situated twenty miles from Yekaterinoslav. Good relations were established with these works; separate leaflets were got ready and were timed to be issued along with leaflets for Yekaterinoslav.

Even before we began our agitational work I thought it necessary to find a separate room for our work, and though I had just lost my job, I managed to rent a room cheaply.

The end of 1897 and the beginning of 1898 was a happy period for those who were distributing leaflets. All that was needed was a little courage to go out into the streets at night; we never met anyone, neither police nor janitors nor provocateurs nor spies; they were sleeping quietly in their beds, while we scattered leaflets around the town. We used this favourable circumstance and returned home quite pleased with ourselves, sometimes meeting a night watchman—but by then our job had been well and truly done.

One evening we received a supply of leaflets for Yekaterinoslav, Zadnepr, and Kamenskoye. They had to be distributed at night; there weren't many of them, so we decided to stick up some. I told a comrade to be prepared to come out with me that evening not earlier than 11 p.m.

It was frosty for Yekaterinoslav and the cold kept most people off the streets; now and then the sound of the night watchmen's clappers could be heard signalling their whereabouts; after which they would no doubt crouch in some cosy corner for a comfortable forty winks.

The moon was climbing high when my comrade and I, our pockets stuffed with leaflets, and carrying a big can of paste, emerged on to the street. We passed the square,

crossed the railway lines and came out into a workers' settlement called "The Factory." We looked round, but there was no one in sight; we brushed some paste on a fence and stuck a leaflet on firmly. We crossed the road carefully, sticking leaflets on the walls of huts, scattering a few more in various directions, or slipping them into cracks in the fences. Then we made for another area where we went through the same procedure; the paste gave out, so we had to content ourselves by using the chinks in the fences.

During the time we were doing all this sticking up and distribution of the leaflets, my comrade was very nervous, and generally didn't feel at all happy. However, he kept at it, and when all the leaflets were gone, we went home quietly so as not to draw attention to what we had been doing.

On their way to work next morning the workers saw the leaflets scattered on the streets, picked them up, or edged them out of the fences; groups gathered round to read those we had pasted up. Some liked the leaflets so much that they tried to pull them off but succeeded only in spoiling them so that neither they nor anyone else could read them. This was one of the reasons why we gave up this method; it was too risky and slow, and it served very little purpose because most of them were torn down.

My comrade and I covered only one district, but there were others out too, putting the leaflets around other places, although there were still too few of us to cope with the task of making a satisfactory distribution everywhere the leaflets were needed.

In considering the distribution of the leaflets the point was made that it was necessary to get them into the factories. Just then, however, the only real possibilities we had were two works, whereas the three largest factories and the railway workshops would be left untouched.

In view of the fact that almost all of us were suspected persons and might easily put the police on the trail of the distributors in the factories, we used the method described above.

The police got to know about the leaflets found on the street only on the following morning and very few of them fell into their hands. Everything went off well on our first distribution; not one of us was caught at it.

This was the situation in Yekaterinoslav and the outskirts, but we had no news as yet of what had happened in Kamenskoye. However, it appeared that it had been all right there too, so the whole venture was a success and made us impatient to get more leaflets out quickly. We decided, however, to let the police calm down, watch our own movements carefully and be on the look-out for spies. This was how I came to notice a doubtful character following me. Taking careful stock, I saw this ordinary-looking man hanging round our house regularly; it was obvious that he had his eye on me. I kept a watch on him, once or twice I came out of the gate when he did not expect me and had a look at him .

He was a common enough type, wearing a peasant cap and a short jacket or coat; he continued either to sit or circle around during the day, usually in the same place, trying to make believe he was paying no attention to the house where I lived. Sensing that something was wrong I told the comrades not to come near me, and stayed in the house myself during the day, leaving my room only in the evening; I kept the lamp burning so that anyone looking at my window would believe I was still at home.

Behind the house was a steep drop to the next street; I let myself down, climbed a fence, and when I was a good bit away from the house and sure I was not being followed, I went about my business. I returned home by the usual way as it was very difficult to get back the way

I had gone out. However, it was not particularly dangerous at that hour so I used this route quite often later. The character I mentioned kept watch on me for about a fortnight; apparently he put in a favourable report because I was able to continue my activities in peace.

About a month after the first leaflet distribution, new ones were prepared for the factories, with a separate leaflet for each place. We knew they would create a stir and perhaps be followed by raids. The leaflets were divided out as follows: some for the railway workers, some for the Bryansk factory, a third lot for the nail works, a fourth bundle for the Hallerschtein (agricultural equipment) factory, a fifth for the Zadnepr workshops, (a joint Franco-Russian firm), and the last lot for Kamenskoye. There were about eight different leaflets, all exposing abuses and the ruthless robbery of the workers in the factory concerned.

The leaflets had to be scattered late at night, or very early in the morning. To check the results next day we all had to leave a definite sign, good or bad, in a selected place; if the sign was not there it meant that the person had been arrested. The mark had to be done with chalk on an agreed spot, either on a fence or a wall; each had his own mark so there would be no misunderstanding. This was a very useful means of passing on information about our clandestine activities.

Late that evening I went to one of the factories along with Matyukha; strewing some leaflets on the way we approached the workgates. It was too dangerous to go inside; we had to exercise great care even going past the place in case the yard dog heard us. Coming up to the two-storey factory building and climbing over the railings, we found ourselves under the windows. I gave Matyukha a leg up, he opened the ventilation window and thrust in a bundle of leaflets. Using the same method, we covered three departments. Only two remained, but the

workers themselves would remedy that next morning, and the leaflets would get round all the shops.

And in fact as soon as the factory opened next morning, the workers began picking up the leaflets lying on the floor or on the benches; inside a quarter of an hour everyone, including the foreman, had read them. While the leaflet did not lead to a strike, it fanned the discontent almost to boiling-point.

Great difficulty was found at another factory in disposing of the leaflets. The factory worked the clock round, and the workers moving about all the time hindered the distribution. The leaflets, however, were in the charge of an amazingly patient and quick-witted worker.

Starting work that morning as usual he went calmly through his day's tasks. When it turned 7 p.m. the workers made ready to go home. So did he, but instead of going out by the gates he went over to a place where an artesian well was being sunk. He got into the pit, seated himself on a ladder and stayed that way for five solid hours until midnight, when the machinery stopped for the night-shift meal hour.

Our voluntary prisoner came carefully to the surface a short while before the switching off of the electricity. This was the precious moment for which he had sat five hours in the hole. As soon as the machinery in the shop stopped, the electricity was turned off to allow the dynamos to be oiled. The lights were no sooner out than the worker jumped out of the pit, dashed into the shop, quickly threw the leaflets around, risking injury by bumping into something in the dark. Then out again fast; out of that shop into another, or simply throwing the leaflets through broken windows. Then he hurried to a spot he had picked out beforehand, and although the electricity had been turned on again, he was over the fence safe and unnoticed.

The electric light was off for about three to five minutes, during which time the workers sat quietly on the benches or somewhere, paying no attention to the person who had come in and was hurriedly throwing papers about. When the lights went on they picked up the leaflets and began to read them. By this time the culprit was jumping over the fence, having just broken a window in the office and pushed in some leaflets there too, after which he went away home tranquilly and lay down to sleep. In the morning he read the leaflet at work as if it was news to him. We used this method more often afterwards.

The powers that be slept at night; they found the leaflets only in the morning when very few were left in the factories, when they were being read in the Ukrainian clay huts, in Kaidaki, or Diyevka, or in Chechelyovka. The police sometimes managed to get only few of the leaflets, and this, of course, could not check the influence which the leaflets produced.

Everything went off splendidly and in much the same way in the other factories; none of the distributors came under suspicion. On this occasion the leaflets stimulated a strong desire for action; all the workers knew about them, so did the managements, the gendarmerie and the town police, but they could not discover who were behind them and this, of course, could not but have a favourable effect on us and on the continuation of our work along similar lines. Rumours circulated among the workers in all the workshops that a revolt would soon be organized; the workers were heartened by the leaflets; on the other hand, the factory managements lost some of their arrogance.

The leaflets distributed in the Kamenskoye works had a demand for a factory first-aid room to be provided; on the following day an assistant doctor was put to practice in the factory. Another request here was for the provision

of two exits and this was also granted along with one or two other demands. The local police officer (obviously in charge of the district) imagined that a strike was inevitable, and not sure what the workers wanted he took what was in the leaflet as their claims, and so without any move on the workers' part these were granted immediately. Similarly, in a number of other factories the workers were given concessions.

Ordinarily, factory managements try to give the impression that all is well in their factories, the workers are satisfied with their conditions, etc. And suddenly all kinds of abuses in the factory are brought into the light of day and cannot be hidden any longer. The workers read the leaflets and recognize the justice of their case and are filled with the desire to put an end, at least partially, to the scandals. And so ripples appear on the calm waters which threaten to become turbulent.

It was strange to hear the rumours among the workers about a revolt—in complete contrast to the message given in the leaflets which said clearly that a rising was undesirable and could bring nothing but harm to the workers. However, they had read something different in the leaflet and nothing would change their belief that a revolt had been ordered. Old methods of struggle die hard; the workers couldn't think of a strike unless it entailed the beating up of a foreman or the wrecking of the factory offices.

Listening to the talk, and often taking a direct part in the discussions myself, I never heard anything said about past strikes, but someone was sure to remember a revolt of some kind, and would talk about past repressions by the authorities, although all this got us nowhere. The discussions always ended in an unexpressed desire to organize a good rebellion. And then, of course, there were stories about some leader or other whom everyone sincerely admired. It is no wonder that in these circumstances the

workers involuntarily idealized not the strike about which they knew nothing, but rebellion—a form of protest that anyone could understand.

While the leaflets were stirring up the factory workers, my own work was accumulating. In the first place, more material had to be collected for new leaflets, and, secondly, I had often to go in the evenings to help my Kaidaki friends with their studies. The young people did not assimilate my ideas very well and often had wrong notions about what I said; there was only one lad among them who understood fully what I was talking about. They were anxious for me to come more often and even tried to rent a room for their classes.

There were two men in the group with whom I clashed; they were close to the *Narodniks*, (or Russian Populists.—*Ed.*) What exasperated me most of all was the heavy-handed way they had of pushing their views—like priests who would brook no opposition. They got as angry as the devil if some youngster broke away from their influence. They were particularly annoyed with G. who was allegedly trying to drag the young people on to the terrifying path of his socialist and revolutionary doctrines. If a person happened to be contaminated with these teachings they would turn their back on him, and when they got the chance they thought it was a good idea to trip him up.

One of these *Narodniks* worked in the fitting shop of the Bryansk works: he had a good wage, owned his own house and lived not at all badly. Socialism, therefore, held no attractions for him and he was always trying to throw a spanner in the works. I tried often to find out their exact views and if they had any kind of programme, but I never could get any satisfaction, except to discover how they educated their lads.

"Before you read *Spartacus* you should know something about the history of Greece, then you'll be able to

understand that novel," said one of them to a young worker. Generally, they put strong emphasis on natural science; when I looked at some books belonging to these gents, I saw that they were mostly collections of arithmetical problems, or courses on grammar, and the like. When the young lads asked them for more serious books they were told they were in too much of a hurry; first, they should learn geography, arithmetics, and grammar, and then take up more serious reading. This explains why these youngsters complained all the time about their leaders and read the recommended books very unwillingly.

Of course, it would be wrong not to see the value of textbooks, but they should be used in school, and not at a time when a person is trying to understand the essence of his social position, or is interesting himself in the labour movement. There were many cases where the students of the *Narodniks*, having discarded their tutors, could not throw themselves wholeheartedly into the working-class movement where sacrifices had to be made. They had been nurtured by their teachers in an egotistical catch-penny spirit, whereas the socialist outlook spurns money-grubbing and proposes one day to put an end to it.

I remember one of the comrades saying how one of these *Narodniks* spied on him when he went into another workshop about something or other, perhaps to use an opportunity to do some propaganda with an acquaintance. The poor devil had to resort to all kinds of sham excuses to outwit this strange spy system of the zealous *Narodniks*. When we talked about this type of person I always called to mind a phrase used by a Petersburg worker named N., when referring to a young worker-Liberal in Petersburg.

"As a Liberal, he's all right, a very fine fellow, but as a Socialist-worker, he's a proper swine."

The same thing might be said of these gentry, too, changing only the first part of the sentence. The funny thing is that the police watch such people and even persecute them. Which only goes to show that the police and the gendarmerie see a devil behind every bush. I decided to have nothing to do with the *Narodniks* and begged the comrades not to speak about me in their presence so that they would know nothing about me. I was afraid of my name being bandied about, which would make it more difficult for me to remain under cover. Publicity in modern Russian conditions is dangerous, as I understood very well; so while I stayed out of their way, I never lost sight of them, and began to go out more frequently to Kaidaki to meetings of the local lads.

Staying there until midnight and as late as one a.m., I would set off home, escorted by a number of the boys, to a place near the Dnieper, where there was a steep bank; from here I went on alone towards the river, shivering in the sharp, piercing wind and frost, holding a short dagger in my hand because it was dangerous in these parts, as I had found out once for myself when I was robbed of money and other belongings.

My contact with the people of Kaidaki made it possible to issue leaflets where they had never been before, and where they came out regularly right up until I left Yekaterinoslav, and I believe even after that.

Spring, 1898, arrived only to see us orphaned again. Immediately after the appearance of the leaflets, a big police drive began against the intelligentsia who would be well-advised to leave town. They seemed to be of a different opinion, however, contending that no one was following them; they continued to call on us, and to draft more new leaflets for distribution.

On one occasion we arranged to meet regarding some problem, or perhaps it was to receive leaflets. I went to the appointed place with another comrade, but none of

our people were there, the only other person to be seen was a stranger standing at the corner. We paid no attention to him while we chatted about various matters. We stood on the square for quite a while before we noticed the stranger looking at us suspiciously. Keeping an eye on him, we began to wonder if he was a spy. Hoping to see his face, I went straight towards him, but when he saw me coming he turned along the street and disappeared into a yard. Following him to the yard gate I looked in, but there was no sign of him; I came back and suggested to my friend that it might be just a coincidence after all.

We continued our vigil on the deserted square, worried and resentful at the unpunctuality of the comrades. Then, finally, one of them arrived and soon after him came one of the intelligentsia. The four of us had just begun to discuss our business, when the sinister figure appeared again, this time much closer; he started to strut round us in a most insolent and provocative manner. We wanted badly to have it out with the spy, but none of us had a gun, while we knew he would be armed. We decided to use cold steel and moved in his direction. Whether he realized the danger, or simply thought that we were going to cross the square, didn't matter, because he began to move across the square fairly speedily. When he was a good way off, we turned back quickly, sped along the street, jumped over a fence, landing in an adjacent street. Here we climbed over another fence and found ourselves in a railway siding, where there was room enough to screen ourselves among the carriages. Now, in our new venue, we went quickly over the points of our business, received a supply of leaflets, and made our separate ways home.

This was our last meeting with the intellectual; it turned out that the spy, who had been sent from the town specially to shadow the intellectual, caught up with

him again. When he was seen getting into an empty carriage the spy judged that a meeting was going to be held there and waited in the hope of catching some of the workers. He failed in this, but the gendarmes soon put the intellectual out of circulation.

I may say that this man of the intelligentsia was devoted to the cause and had a blind faith in the speedy realization of his convictions.

One evening I was escorting him home when we met D. There wasn't a soul about, as it wasn't a safe part of town for people to be on the streets at such a late hour. Unconcerned, we sat down on a foot bridge and carried on a lively conversation about our affairs.

We were enveloped in a night mist, and only the extended glow of the Bryansk works reminded us vividly and insistently that there was work to be done. The intellectual was carried away with himself; he emphasized his belief that, given three or four more years of agitational activity, the whole social order would collapse.

I smiled indulgently at this naive and well-meaning comrade, a warm-hearted, simple Socialist prepared to sacrifice himself to the end for his ideals. And I would not try to have him otherwise. He was of great value to us in Yekaterinoslav, being the first to take up agitational work and the first to bring leaflets aimed at exposing and explaining to the mass of workers the wretchedness of their existence, and to plant the seed of revolution in their unthinking minds. It seems that prolonged confinement in prison subsequently shattered the mental system of this pioneer.

And so he was arrested, and along with him several others of the intelligentsia, but not a single worker was taken. Therefore, though we and our cause suffered a setback, the arrests did not affect deeply the work among the masses, because the working-class leadership was

intact. Our activities were improving; the number of people engaged in the distribution of literature grew from day to day. But I'm going too fast.

As I explained already, at the very beginning of our leaflet distribution we abandoned the method of pasting them on fences and walls near the factory gates because the police got on to it pretty quickly. I recall one very frosty night: the snow was crisp under our feet as my comrade and I left the flat, our pockets crammed full of leaflets. We scattered a few leaflets in one street, then, turning at the end of the street, we slipped into the two parallel streets, placing leaflets in likely spots, while moving from one side of the street to the other.

Having finished these streets, we made off in the direction of the Bryansk factory, leaving leaflets in suitable points on the road leading to the factory. We covered a fair amount of ground in this way, then retraced our steps, crossed over the railway, and came out in another locality, again laying leaflets where they would be noticed by workers going to the factories.

Turning, and moving along past a fence, we planted a few leaflets, re-crossed the railway lines, crept under the carriages near the signals, leaving our trail of leaflets as we went; when our pockets were almost empty we turned back, passed the factory, and came on to a much frequented road leading to it, where we left the last of the leaflets. There were only two of us, but we had tried to make sure that so many streets were sown with leaflets that some would reach every factory.

When we had got rid of them all in this way, and were cleaned out completely, we headed for home, not forgetting to chalk on the fences the sign that would indicate to our own people next day that everything had passed off splendidly, and that our homes were still open to visitors. When we got to work next morning we heard nothing but stories and gossip about the leaflets.

It is interesting how people are inclined to magnify anything that happens during the night. Some were explaining that there must have been many of "them" to give out so many leaflets in so many places in one night, and there were various conjectures about the power and strength of "these people," their courage, and so on.

When a worker picked up a leaflet, instead of stopping to read it and expose himself to danger, he would bring it into the factory to read. It had been difficult on the first occasion to find out what impression the leaflets had on the workers and what they said about them, because active workers were scarce at that time. Now we decided to give this our special attention; we were all obliged to listen carefully to the discussions and report them in detail to the committee. Besides this, every active comrade had the duty, where possible, to maintain friendly contact with workers in their homes, even with those who had no special interest in revolutionary activity, in order to collect as much exact information as possible about conditions in the factories.

After three or four leaflets had been distributed in the Kamenskoye works (20 miles from Yekaterinoslav), the authorities became suspicious of several of those who had been distributing literature. One of these comrades travelled in to see me one Sunday; he was followed by another, and both told me of their intention to emigrate to Austria where life was better and freer than in Russia.

I was sorry to see comrades going away at a time when our activity was just getting under way, when every conscious worker was important and valuable and we had not as yet laid a solid foundation. Yet here were people who were concerned only with themselves, ready to show a clean pair of heels—it was really annoying.

On the other hand, I was afraid they might be arrested, and that meant making a present of them to the

gendarmes. It would be good to save them from prison, so let them leave Yekaterinoslav and get away from the monstrous creature that wanted to devour them. I persuaded my Kamenskoye comrades to let me know when they were safely over the Russian frontier. They promised to do so, and indeed not long afterwards word came of their safe arrival in Austria, where they had got work quickly. The comrades, before leaving, put us in touch with their contacts, and when they had gone, the leaflet distribution continued as before.

These were the first comrades in revolutionary activity in Yekaterinoslav with whom I had to part company. Soon after this another comrade left, he who had helped me in the nightly excursions with the leaflets, better known as the one who had sat five hours in the well. And that's how things were: you just get the movement going when you begin to lose the comrades with whom you have worked and who are heart and soul with you.

Next we lost several of the intelligentsia who had been our inspiration up to then. To the credit of the intelligentsia I must say that they seldom did anything in the way of independent work without first consulting us, so that any new activity was carried through successfully and constantly improved; during the whole time there were few disputes among us, a very important point anywhere and everywhere in such circumstances, and well worth noting. And now we were losing these intellectuals who all along had successfully fulfilled their important tasks.

It must be admitted that, while we felt their loss very keenly, it was the agitational activity that suffered most; there was no one to look after the technical side, so there were no more leaflets, as we did not feel capable of drafting and editing these ourselves.

We got no time to discuss our position just as the sudden avalanche which has just engulfed human beings

gives one no time to search for special equipment to save the victims, but time only to grasp a spade and dig tirelessly, endlessly, until the bodies are taken out, dead or alive. It was up to us quickly to accept the inevitable.

Comrade D. was given the responsibility of arranging a place to keep the literature; there was not much of it, but it was valuable to us, so we had to be all the more thorough and careful in safeguarding it. D. rented a room for two rubles, brought the literature in a hamper and pushed it under a sofa. On the following day he left the flat, saying that he had to go away on personal business; in fact he went back to the flat where he stayed regularly and which he had no mind to leave. He went once or twice a week to spend the night in the flat where the literature was concealed, in order not to arouse suspicion, or specially for literature.

We then began to look round for some assistance because it was hard for two of us to carry on alone; it was a bit frightening to think of taking on the big responsibility of giving leadership and direction to thousands of workers. As far as I can remember, we distributed some leaflets, but the intelligentsia at this time were very inactive.

Apart from the fact that D. and I had to edit the leaflets by ourselves, and D. had often to write the originals and print them, we had also to lead the work and see to distribution of the leaflets; but this was easier, because we enjoyed such strong and sincere support from the workers that it was enough to deliver the leaflets to them; they carried out the distribution without us.

Our activity was going forward with great strides; our roots among the workers were spreading out and taking a firmer grip.

We succeeded in bringing two new people into activity, thus enabling us to form a closely knit group to serve as the leadership for the whole Yekaterinoslav movement, to produce leaflets for the various factories and answer the questions raised by the factory workers. And our words were soon transformed into deeds. We prepared large quantities of leaflets, which were distributed among the workers and on the thoroughfares of Yekaterinoslav.

I remember one particular meeting we held to discuss some question or other. Like all our meetings at that time, it was held in the open air on the outskirts of the town. We were all assembled with the exception of one comrade who was late. We talked about various questions, about rumours we had heard, and began to discuss the agenda of the meeting, but still no sign of the comrade.

We were tired of waiting, and not knowing the reason for his absence, we lost patience and were on the point of dispersing. Just then the comrade arrived; we greeted him anything but kindly, demanding peremptorily what had detained him.

He replied curtly, and generally seemed to be excited about something. Then he told us that he had a special piece of news for us that would bring joy not only to us, but to all Russia and especially to the Russian working class. Apparently he had made up his mind to get the most out of his information. We listened silently and waited until he would at least give us a hint of the news and finally divulge it.

Then he revealed dramatically that all the leagues of struggle for the emancipation of the working class had amalgamated and formed a single party to be called the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. He pulled

out the manifesto[1] the Party had issued on the question; we read it standing up in honour of the new Party. Right there and then we acclaimed ourselves the Yekaterinoslav Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

One evening, while sitting in the flat with G., I had a pleasant surprise. Accompanied by a Petersburg comrade, into the room walked P. A. Morozov. He had just returned from exile in the Vologda province. Being old friends, we soon found ourselves in agreement on almost all questions. P. A. was a strong, politically experienced comrade who had worked with many different people and on many different tasks, and could be of great assistance. Therefore I decided that he should be asked to work on the committee. I put this proposition to the others and got their agreement.

That was understandable because we were then short of good workers and here was one who was well versed in illegal work, with a rich experience, and who could help us to edit our various leaflets. P. A. Morozov was just the man we needed, a most desirable comrade to have around. He was accepted as a member of the Yekaterinoslav Committee.

Before the return of Morozov, and prior to the time when the Yekaterinoslav group of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class became the Yekaterinoslav Committee, I had a serious talk with the old man who had gone to live over the Dnieper in a place called Nizhnedneprovsk. I went there often in the evenings, or on Sundays, and we organized small meetings of two or three people at his place.

These meetings were not of a revolutionary character, nevertheless, they were held in such secrecy that none of the other occupants of the flat could enter the room

[1] Manifesto of the First Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.—*Ed.*

where we met. Of course, even at these meetings, I was guided by purely revolutionary ideas.

The old man had for long cherished the thought of opening a co-operative store. He honestly believed that such a business would be a paying concern and provide a good income that would give us the possibility of advancing the cause more rapidly. By this time I was already acquainted with the co-operative movement, especially with the Brussels People's Co-Operative and this, of course, encouraged me to hope that we could be just as successful and be able to draw on co-operative resources for revolutionary work. At the time I liked the idea very much.

The old man's plan was to open a small store near a factory, so that we could have customers in plenty, especially if we went out of our way to make it popular. He assured me that he knew the trading business and that the cost of running the store would be insignificant and if it was not a success, we would lose very little. We decided to weigh all the pros and cons.

We held several informal meetings, and when the decision was finally taken to open the store, it was thought best to keep the matter to ourselves meantime. And so we decided after all to go ahead with the plan. All that remained now was to find part of the money to buy stock; although the store itself would not be very large, the intention was to make a profit, but if there was no money to lay out on stock the plan would remain on paper. I persuaded my comrades to make a donation of five rubles each towards a certain project; added to my personal contribution, the collection came to fifty rubles. I asked a friend who had two hundred rubles saved up, to make us a loan on the basis of a promissory note. He was a person not fully in sympathy with us, but he agreed to loan 100 or 150 rubles (I can't remember the exact amount) to the old man, who signed for it.

The old man and two others belonged to an organization which had come into existence during economic struggles, when a number of men had been arrested and thrown into jail like criminals. They had been charged with beating up one of the management. To cover the expenses of their trial and their personal needs, a collection had been taken, yielding what was then a fair sum of money. There was a surplus of 30 rubles in the fund which could not be used (the arrested men had been sent to their own localities). We decided to put this money into circulation on the condition that in the event of a demand to help people, arrested for distributing leaflets or participating in the circles, one-third of the money would be refunded, the borrowed money to be used meantime to get the store going. We had now collected 200 rubles; later another fifty was added and with this cash behind us we plunged into the sea of commerce!

For legal purposes, the store was to be registered in the old man's name; he would look after it and attend to all matters connected with it. On receipt of the money, he signed another promissory note as a guarantee against unforeseen accidents. So from the beginning we took all legal precautions for the protection of the money.

Besides, the old man was to submit the accounts periodically to one of us acting as an auditor, along with a statement showing the turnover and the stock on hand. I was chosen auditor, and so I took on a heavy share of the responsibility for the enterprise.

It was decided to hold general meetings periodically, where reports would be made and appropriate decisions taken. We agreed to try and have the store open for trade for three months, during which period the general meeting would decide whether it was to be continued or closed down. And finally it was decided that each of us would canvass for customers, but avoid, as far as possible, giving credit.

After the meeting, with the money secured and general agreement reached, our agent set about looking for suitable accommodation for the store; he had real difficulty in finding a place, and here we met our first disappointment. The main reason was our lack of sufficient capital. A place was found, but the rent asked for was from 250 to 300 rubles a year. Considering that the building had not only room for a store, but also had plenty of accommodation for a family, it was quite reasonable and convenient, especially as it held out the possibility of gradually increasing trade.

However attractive the proposition, it was impossible to accept it because of the smallness of our available resources, and we had to look on it as something we might be able to afford in the future. A month later, we rented a place in the market-place for 18 rubles a month, on a six months' lease with a quarter's rent in advance. We had to agree to these conditions because a better place could not be found. This took almost a fourth of our capital; then a trading license had to be paid for, and there were all kinds of other miscellaneous expenses; this outlay soon made a real hole in our fund.

And when this had been arranged, we had to lay in stock out of what money we had left, and this quite insignificant sum was supposed to bring in a profit. We lost all hope of ever making money out of the store, but we just had to exert every effort now if any of the money already spent was to be saved.

I remember going one Sunday to congratulate our pseudo-owner on the opening of the store and to see what it looked like inside. It was a fair-sized place in a busy thoroughfare. There were plenty of buyers around; the owner looked business-like. The one regret was that there was almost nothing to sell. During the half hour or so I was in the store, four or five people came in to ask for something, only to be told that it was not in

stock. The boxes on the shelves were empty; the goods on show were few and far between; one wall was completely bare, not even a nail in it.

There were several paper bags containing two or three pounds of various sorts of meal, four or five glass jars, holding confectionery, also in small quantities; several pounds of sausage meat were hanging up, and on the porch by the door stood a full barrel of herring; and there were some kippers tied together, bread and a few other items for village customers.

I felt very depressed, but recovered my spirits a little, as well as my hopes for the future of the store, when I heard how much money had been taken in the first days. Once I had found out the extent of the sales and the money drawn, what was needed in the way of goods, and what to buy first, I got ready to leave for home. I bought what I could in the store for my own use but was asked not to take certain things which could be sold to local buyers.

This was the beginning of our co-operative store; it wasn't a very satisfactory start, nevertheless, I was still of the opinion that a store like this could be opened in every town. There was just one thing wrong: we could not use the name "co-operative store"; at present it had to be kept secret, which obviously did not help it any. Besides, to open a store with the means at our disposal was not worth trying unless it was a private concern.

It should be pointed out that even a small store like ours required the owner's presence fourteen to fifteen hours a day, and having installed the man we were obliged to give him a definite salary; in spite of our poverty we paid him ten rubles. Consequently the minimum expenditure was 30 rubles monthly: rent—18 rubles; service—10 rubles; watchman—from 60 kopeks to one ruble; then light, and miscellaneous expenditure; for stock we had 60 to 70 rubles.

Although I lived over five miles from the store and had no special need to go there, still it took up a lot of time that I could ill afford from revolutionary work. Now I felt keenly this particular sacrifice, whereas at one time it would not have troubled me at all. The result was that D. took me to task for wasting too much valuable time on the store. While regretting the time it took up, I could not help going out to the store at least once a week, to listen to the ever-mounting complaints about the indifference even of the founders towards the store, and how very hard it was for a man well up in years to carry it on alone.

I sensed the implied reproach to myself in the old man's lament, and therefore I replied bluntly that it was impossible to spare more of my free time on the store to the detriment of revolutionary activity, and that if the others would not help we would be hard put to it to find a way out. Without even making the usual check on the stores transactions I went away feeling that it would strongly offend the old man; I believed in his honesty.

Our revolutionary work moved steadily on its way. Our meetings were also proceeding smoothly; now and then leaflets, augmented by other literature, were issued.

Now I'll have to go back a bit.

After the police raids, as I already mentioned, we found a hiding-place for the literature, but the room selected proved to be more risky and very inconvenient. Therefore, D. and I agreed to think out a new plan to safeguard it, and came to the conclusion that G. should be asked to look after the hamper and its contents; I had already sought G.'s agreement. We thought it would be a good idea to dig a hole under his house where we could bury the hamper. And, certainly, no one else would have to know anything about it.

We decided to act. I stood by the gate of a house with a communicating courtyard, waiting with a sense of

uneasiness for D., who was due to arrive with the hamper in a cab. And there it was coming round the corner at a moderate pace. The cab stopped and D. paid the cabman, while I lifted the hamper on to my shoulder and walked through the yard to the next street, then to a third street where G. was waiting. He took the hamper and we went off to the flat together. After locking the door we looked through the contents of the hamper.

The collection was a modest one; however, I found much that was interesting and G., a poor reader at the best of times, was agreeably surprised at the variety of the books and had a strong desire to read those he had not read before.

After putting the books in order and making a list of them we pushed the hamper against the wall. Several times that evening and during the night G. clambered down below the house and tried to dig the hole, before it became clear to us that the plan would not work; the hiding-place was too hard to get at and not without its dangers. Then quite suddenly we found another and safer place to store the hamper, so we lost no time in transporting it there as if it contained only spare clothes. The new hiding-place suited us very well; besides, we were sure the police did not keep a watch on it.

On one occasion G. came to see me at the flat dressed in woman's clothes. I did not realize who it was at first, but such caution was never wasted if a suspect person had a particularly important job on hand. We had to be watchful when leaving the house late in the evening and at night, looking around carefully in case there was someone keeping an eye on the house. Sometimes, when visiting a comrade, we took the precaution of walking right round the building where he lived—to spot the spy, if there happened to be one.

At the end of summer we lost two members of the committee; one got scared and the other flew off to

London, so we were forced to find two more to fill their places. Our committee, consisting of a number of workers, had functioned for six months, and so far we had no losses through police raids; our meetings for the most part took place in the open country where we were never once detected. In such conditio s of secrecy we could have on the committee only people who were vigilant and self-reliant.

About this time I met a man who was also a police suspect and who had worked at one time in one of the bigger towns. For a long time he had been trying to find people who held views like his own, and he was anxious to take an active part in the work. We waited until we got confirmation of his reliability before taking him into the organization, meanwhile maintaining friendly relations with him; then we accepted him and brought him on to the committee. After this, G. also became a member of the committee. Thus we made up for the two we had lost by getting two men who were thoroughly devoted to the cause; our committee was now able to continue working on the correct lines.

Then we had a visitor representing the organization in one of the big towns; he brought a friend with him who was to work on our committee. The new comrade came from the intelligentsia; he had a higher education, but when he saw how independently we worked, that we were accustomed to and knew our business, he felt uneasy and admitted that his knowledge of labour questions left much to be desired. Therefore, we gave him a youth study group to teach and brought him on to the committee where he appeared several times. This was the first man from the intelligentsia of that time to take on a study circle.

The winter of 1898 was at hand. Our agitational activities became more regular and methodical, but there were hardly any study circles and few of the intelligent-

sia who could have helped to remedy this. The committee members did not have the time for systematic study, and it had been agreed that the committee must meet at least once a week. This decision was one of the most useful for our activity. Although we met only once a week, it entailed a lot of work, because everyone who came to the meeting would start explaining what was going on in the workshop or factory where he was employed, and each one emphasized the importance of his case, often proposing that a leaflet be issued on the question.

Whenever a strike took place, even on the smallest possible scale, or perhaps just a dispute over some factory question, the committee had to know all the details, take a decision and carry it out. Recognizing that the committee was getting into difficulties, the members were grateful when any of the intelligentsia turned up at the meetings, but we could not count on much help from that quarter because there were too few of them around.

It was in this year that my comrade D. was arrested. This was a very serious blow to the committee because he was our oldest member and knew the organization better than any of us. He held the connections with the intelligentsia, or, as we expressed it, with the town, because there were always one or two persons in the town ready to help us with various kinds of literature. With the arrest of D. we lost our contact with the town group that had kept us supplied with literature and money, as well as tutors for our study circles.

Weakened as we were, we, the Yekaterinoslav workers, tried in every possible way to bring all our forces into play so that our lack of strength would be less noticeable.

On more than one occasion during my stay in Yekaterinoslav we were completely bereft of intelligentsia. After D. had been arrested (on a charge not connected

with Yekaterinoslav) I had to maintain contact with the town, and this extra work took up a lot of my time.

As I was not able to carry out this task very well it was proposed that one of the town comrades should attend our committee as a representative of the intelligentsia. One was found very soon, because just then a number of intellectuals had come back from exile and were anxious to get into the organization. It appeared that a group of them had already formed their own town committee. Our committee at first knew nothing about this new organization which naturally wanted to take on the leadership of the whole work.

It was rather strange that at a time when the existing organization, i.e., the workers' committee, was meeting weekly, discussing a variety of problems and issuing leaflets, another committee should appear alongside of it, one which, of course, was in no position to undertake the work being done by the workers' committee, such as providing literature, money, and the printing of leaflets.

As I pointed out already, the intelligentsia wished to take on themselves the writing up and editing of leaflets and generally giving leadership to the movement. This gave rise to conflicts on the workers' committee, provoked mainly by delegates from the committee of the intelligentsia.

The conflicts were incidental and easy to settle at first, but gradually they became very unpleasant. Dissatisfaction and dissension grew in our committee, and of course our work suffered as a result.

Very often the intelligentsia would criticize draft leaflets for their lack of literary style, and indeed the text of one leaflet was changed and cut out of all recognition by the town committee. There was a fearful row about it.

A fair time passed; the atmosphere on the committee, if anything, got worse. Various proposals were made at

each meeting to bring about a fusion of the two committees. One suggestion was to hold a joint session of the two bodies at which a united committee with an equal number of representatives from each side would be elected. The town committee would not accept this proposal, because, they said, the meeting would be too large and would attract police attention. For some unexplained reason they disagreed also with the idea of having an equal number of representatives from each side (as proposed by us) and yet it was essential that both committees find a way out of the quandary.

Finally agreement was reached on the following compromise:

1. The workers' committee to meet as usual; one of the intellectuals' committee to attend with the right to vote. This delegate could not be changed and could not bring any other member of his committee with him without a special decision on each occasion by the workers' committee.

2. In exactly the same way, the town committee was obliged to send notice of its meetings to the workers' committee representative, who would attend them and report to the workers' committee the questions discussed and the decisions taken.

3. Each committee could present a draft leaflet for either a single factory or for Yekaterinoslav as a whole, but the final editing of the leaflet and the timeliness and necessity of its distribution would be decided by the workers' committee.

Once agreement had been reached on these questions, they caused hardly any disputes; in fact the workers' committee often accepted leaflets written by the town committee without making any changes.

In the winter of 1898 and 1899 all localities and districts of Yekaterinoslav were red-hot with our revolutionary propaganda and agitation. We had members in

every factory keeping us supplied with information about the moods of the workers and factory abuses. The workers were especially discontented with the Circassians who were employed as guards in several factories. The Circassians were a mean and coarse lot; they were armed with swords and often, too, with guns, and would defend savagely every foreman, or chief, and more so the director, or his assistant. They were always ready, on the least excuse, to seize their weapons and throw themselves upon the workers.

In precisely the same savage way they carried out their orders inside the factories. If anyone fell foul of a foreman, the latter would telephone to the gatehouse for a Circassian and, jeering brutally at the worker, order him to throw the "rebel," or, more often, the "drunkard," out of the factory, an order that was no sooner said than done. Such actions as these, and the boorish manners of the Circassians, inspired the workers with hatred for them; there was frequent strife between them demanding the attention of the police and the district authorities.

These encounters were most serious across the Dnieper, and particularly in the Franco-Russian Co. wagon works. From the first day it opened this workshop was a hotbed of discontent and revolutionary activity; frequent strikes took place as a consequence of clashes with the management. The Circassians were an eyesore to every worker.

In the spring of 1897, as I was coming towards this factory from Nizhnedneprovsk railway station in company with a dozen or so people, I witnessed a rather unusual incident. We were just approaching the workgates when a Circassian came out, obviously a senior guard. He seemed to be on his way to the station to get a train to town.

As soon as we saw him my companions started a spirited discussion about how they'd like to beat him up.

I listened to the comrades talk, but never thought for a moment that they were serious. However, as we came nearer to the Circassian, who was coming down the centre of the railway line, all of us stepped to the outside of the rails, i.e., all except one, who, reproaching the others for showing cold feet, walked straight up the middle of the rails right into the Circassian officer and smacked him one on the ear.

The Circassian reached for his gun, but before he could draw it a shower of stones and bricks came flying at him from all sides. He threw himself over to a fence, cowered down like a wildcat and showed a clean pair of heels. We moved on to the workgates, where about twenty people were standing. A Cossack sergeant came out and went to the assistance of the assaulted officer. Both began to look through the crowd for the assailant.

The attacked officer immediately recognized the man who had struck him, but the latter denied he had done anything of the kind and refused to go with the sergeant. Then two "witnesses" backed up the comrade, mentioning a fictitious name as the guilty one. The affair petered out at that, with the officer still unconvinced, and swearing that he would remember and be avenged, and if he failed, his children would not! It's hardly necessary to add that our friend had no intention of trying to get a job in that factory.

There was another similar occurrence when I went to this factory in, I think, 1898, on or about May 1st, to meet a comrade. Right away I could see that something unusual was happening in the factory yard. At the gate I learned that the assistant director had been beaten up an hour or two earlier. The gates were being guarded, not by a Circassian, but by a policeman.

After what had happened he was so scared that when I walked through the gate he did not try to stop me. As I was going through the yard towards the main office

I noticed a crowd of about fifty workers with the district police chief in front of them addressing them in a domineering manner.

I was interested and pushed my way into the centre of the crowd. The police officer made a long speech, ending by advising the workers to return to work. One worker, with the others backing him up, replied sharply and excitedly to the officer, who, seeing that he was getting nowhere, went into the office.

It appeared that the workers had left their shops and assembled in the yard demanding the presence of the assistant director, who came out and began to shout at them, but seeing only angry faces round him, toned down, and with the help of the Circassian sergeant who accompanied him, tried to move back to the office.

This manoeuvre failed for the simple reason that someone threw a sack over his head; then another worker hit him and knocked him down. There was an uproar; the factory whistle went off and the workers rushed out of the gates.

The assistant director, with blood streaming from his head, was taken into the office, outside of which a crowd gathered.

The workers did not work for two days after this incident; they were boiling with rage and there were furious discussions about doing something to free those who had been arrested. They knew, however, that the authorities had soldiers concealed in a shed for just such an eventuality.

A victory was gained by the workers because they were granted the demand that gave rise to the beating up of the assistant director; on Saturdays after that work stopped at 2 p.m.

The Circassians were sent away from the Dnieper district and were not to be seen in any of the factories or in Yekaterinoslav itself. Only in the Bryansk works did

they continue by their presence to earn the hatred of the workers.

One time, late in the evening, while coming from work in the nearby tube-rolling works, some workers pulled a plank of wood out of the fence round the Bryansk works. The Circassian guard ran after them and tried to seize the plank. There was a scuffle and workers began to run from all sides towards the scene. It looked as if the Circassian was in for a bad time, but other Circassians ran out of the gates to his aid. One of them drew a dagger, struck one of the workers and killed him.

The workers went mad with fury; they tore into the Bryansk works, demolished and set fire to the Circassians' guardhouse and destroyed their belongings. Another and more numerous group headed for the main office, wrecking and ransacking it and attempting to break open the safe.

A sledge-hammer was fetched and the small safe smashed open; part of the money it contained was seized and thrown among the crowd. Then the office went up in flames and were burnt to the ground.

Almost simultaneously, in the village of Kaidaki (where a Circassian had killed a worker) a government spirits shop was broken into, all the vodka drunk on the spot, the till robbed, and all without any interference.

Part of the crowd of workers, fuddled and fuming with drink, moved towards the factory store and smashed it open, as they had done with the spirits shop, and began to destroy the goods. Another section about thirty strong, having set fire to the office, went to Chechelyovka where the main factory store was situated; here they were met with revolver shots, so they retreated, after showering some heavy blows on the metal shutters of the store.

At that moment the infantry arrived from the nearest barracks. They surrounded the wrecked store, thus sav-

ing it from being set alight, although it is doubtful if this would have happened for fear of burning the workers' homes around the store.

When the main office had been destroyed some workers wanted to go right into the factory and do the same there but they were stopped by the workers on the night-shift. They crowded down to the gates, and fearing attack, armed themselves with pieces of iron.

The chief of police who had just arrived demanded to know from the officer in charge why he did not disperse the workers. The officer replied that it was too dangerous, whereupon the chief, wishing to show up the officer's cowardice and exhibit his own bravery, went right in among the workers and began ordering them about. For an answer he got hit on the head with a stone; he collapsed and had to be carried home.

Things quietened down by 4 a.m. Almost at once we issued a leaflet to the Bryansk workers explaining that they were making fruitless sacrifices, and calling on them to undertake a properly organized strike. Soon afterwards the Cossacks were removed and the management began to build a new office—this time made of brick.

During the ensuing trial, the technical personnel and practically the whole of the factory management attempted to throw their own guilt on the revolutionaries, their activity and leaflets, which, they said, aroused the workers to revolt. But one of the engineers took a good stand at the trial: he explained many of the less known conditions of work in the factory (although as a boss he was one of the worst scoundrels).

He said that the leaflets always wrote about matters such as the cutting of piece-work rates, the arrogant attitude of the management to the workers, and various other abuses, which naturally found a response among the workers.

At that time strikes were quite a common occurrence, although not very large in scale, and for the most part they ended without interference either from the managerial side or the town police, either by the immediate satisfaction of the workers' demands, or on the basis of a compromise.

I remember that, during the trial of the Bryansk workers, the newspaper *The Dnieper Area* was being bought up like hot cakes, but the workers' thirst for news of the trial was not assuaged by the scanty reports in the paper; this gave rise to a lot of talk about a leaflet that would give more detailed news.

"What do you get from the paper, just wait, there will soon be a leaflet to tell us all about it. They're a bit long in getting it out, I hope nothing's happened to them."

Talk like this showed that the workers had great faith in our leaflets and it is understandable why the leaflets helped later to stimulate systematic activity in the right direction.

Unfortunately there was one outstanding weakness; that was in the work of the study groups. We made repeated demands to the town committee for tutors but were told that none were available for the educational work. At one meeting of the town committee I remember putting this request for tutors very bluntly and had it made clear to me that not one of those present was prepared to take on the study circles.

There were various reasons; some were psychological, others of a personal nature—women—but the main reason was that none of them had the gift of the gab. "What will they study?" "We haven't got the literature," they said. "Let's get the literature together first, then we'll begin." Apparently they began then to write pamphlets, but of course this was out of keeping with the committee's activity, because there were more urgent un-

solved problems and requirements to be met. Well, it looked impossible to find the right persons at that meeting, so we limited ourselves to a resolution that the sooner we find tutors the better.

Not long afterwards I heard of a young man who offered to help in the workers' study circles. We fixed a meeting for a Sunday, when I would inform him about the circle and the workers who were to be the students. I took another comrade, a worker, with me; he was to take the tutor direct to the flat where the circle would be waiting for the man who would help them to study.

My comrade waited a little behind while I went on to speak to the intellectual. Right away he asked me to clarify his position in relation to the circle. He was evidently opposed to any kind of control of his work, saying so in a most demagogical fashion. He said he would take on the circle only on condition that it had complete autonomy. I then made my proposals which he turned down, and we parted forever. Again we had to disappoint the workers who had turned up for the circle, the more so because I could not go myself that Sunday to talk to them.

During that same summer (1898), I often visited Nizhnedneprovsk on business connected with the co-operative store. I came in touch with the local movement which was then taking the form of clashes and outbursts somewhat similar to what had happened with the assistant director in the Bryansk works. My old comrade introduced me to two personalities who later became leaders of the movement in Nizhnedneprovsk.

As a start I asked them to collect all kinds of material on the lives of the local workers, but as they were no hand at writing, it was left to me to put down on paper all that was going on in the town. It was then I understood that the progress made by the workers in the years 1895 and 1896 was anything but satisfactory.

These workers were afraid of their own shadow; they were neither steadfast nor capable and they lacked courage, and when they did try to develop leaders of their own, there was nothing practical for them to do.

When we had been forced to give up the store, I was able to visit the area more often, and I took the opportunity of putting our new comrades to work, finding supporters and distributing pamphlets. By autumn they had gathered quite a number of people around them; they asked for rules to govern their fund and expressed the need for a more stable leadership of the movement.

The rules were drafted in a bluntly revolutionary spirit and a general meeting was convened on a Sunday. When I came into the large well-lit room many workers were already there, some of whom I knew; we had to wait for the late-comers.

The time of waiting was spent in conversation, but most of them kept silent, watching me closely. Of course, they had been told about me, too much in fact for my liking. Finally everyone invited was there but two.

"Well, friends, I think we should begin the meeting," I said.

All agreed; it seemed that the most influential workers had come; altogether there would be about eighteen present. Before outlining the fund rules I spoke about the workers' movement, about the need for organization, and so on. Then I read out the draft rules; I asked if they would serve the purpose and if the meeting would accept them.

At the same time I mentioned the need to disseminate illegal literature and, in general, for anti-government activity. Everyone favoured the adoption of the rules. We went over these seriatim, asking whether each point was clear, or did it need to be amplified or explained more. After a general exchange of opinion, the clause was accepted.

I was particularly worried about one point which said that each member was obliged, if called upon, to distribute legal and illegal literature. However, the point was accepted without objection and the rest of the draft provided no difficulty. At the end, the rules were adopted as a whole.

The organization was given the name—The Beginning. We went on from that to the election of responsible officials, especially a treasurer. No special responsibility could be given to me as an outsider, but I did accept the duty of exercising general control over the activity.

When the business terminated a small number of the audience gradually withdrew; but the main body decided to remain behind with the idea of congratulating one another, in less sober fashion, on the birth of the new organization. I declined to take part in this, but of course could not condemn it outright.

Sometime later I remember coming to talk to them on the subject of the labour movement. We met in one of the clay huts; there were seven or so present and I tried to do the best I could. I spoke for a long time, not less than two hours. I got a very attentive hearing; they were obviously impressed with my knowledge, and apparently took it all in.

When I had finished speaking and we had decided to go on to discussion the listeners began to falter, asking me to excuse them, but they'd like to have a drink! Of course, most of them were fathers of families, or old enough to be, and I knew quite well that before I met them they spent most of their time in a saloon. And so I had to work with men who were a bit weak in the knees.

I know a case, where one of these workers went off one time to a factory in another district (near Yekaterinoslav) to see a friend. He took along several illegal pamphlets and was arrested with them on his person. When his address was telegraphed to the local gendarmes, they

went to his home but found nothing there except empty bottles; he was set free. There were more than one such cases.

In view of these circumstances, I did not insist on strict sobriety, but I know they themselves were not too happy about it; in fact several of them gave up drinking altogether and others cut it down.

I had to pay many visits to Nizhnedneprovsk with literature for which there was a big demand. The readers by that time had learned to keep the literature well hidden from prying eyes, and this was all to the good.

Some of the members fell away; they were frightened after all by the rules agreed to at the meeting. Nevertheless, being workmates and knowing who was working alongside of them, they exercised great care to avoid bringing danger upon one another.

The majority of these members were employed in the factory belonging to the Franco-Russian Co.; as a result there was always plenty of excitement in the factory and more than once the management was placed in a ludicrous situation. The factory inspector was never away from the place, trying to find some way to reconcile management and workers, pledging his word on many occasions to defend workers from dismissal and arrest and never once failing to do so.

Beginning with the summer of 1899 it was more difficult to get employment and by winter the factories began to cut staff. At the Franco-Russian Co. works, a new organization came into being to agitate for the reduction of the office staff and to cut the salaries of the directors and other leading personnel. Ignoring the fact that it was all in opposition to the spirit of pure capitalist enterprise, the organization, nevertheless, demanded that the factory work to full capacity.

I had to argue more than once with these hot-headed and unthinking workers to show them that such demands

were impossible to achieve. As usual, they attacked me and accused me of supporting capitalism, notwithstanding that they knew me very well and valued my services, for they came to me regularly to get explanations of all kinds of questions. The committee put out a leaflet on the dismissals, and very timely.

One fine evening—this was in the autumn of 1899—I was at home after work, having my evening meal, when I was surprised by the hasty arrival of two young workers from this factory. I knew both of them fairly intimately, of course. They explained that wholesale dismissals were taking place at the factory; more than fifty had already been sacked.

A special delegate committee of about thirteen workers had been elected to negotiate with the management on the following day. The two visitors were members of our committee. I must say that I could not help feeling a sense of satisfaction with the fact that the negotiations were to be undertaken by people advocating the conception of socialism—practically all the delegates were Socialists. It was a good demonstration that our work was bearing fruit and that we were beginning to function as real leaders.

The only regret was that the movement in the factory was not on the offensive, but on the defensive, and that it was a question not of what more we could win, but of making the least possible concessions, and at the same time avoid sacrificing ourselves to the gendarmes. One of the young visitors demanded passionately that an approach be made to the government to place orders with the factory, and extend a subsidy to it, ban the dismissals and reduce the salaries of the director and the foremen, etc., etc.

Such enthusiasm on the part of a young worker is understandable, especially one who is not well-read, but who, nevertheless, believes in the strength of the working

class and in socialism. I tried to cool him down and to explain to him that it was impossible in the present situation to get what he wanted.

Then they said that since both of them had been elected as delegates and the negotiations with the director were to take place next day, they had come to me for instructions. Our policy had been already prepared; it had been explained partly in leaflets; our first demand was: no dismissals; the second: cut the working day by two hours. So even if wages fell at least no one would be sacked.

The factory management agreed to these proposals which were made by the delegates; the factory went on to an eight-hour day instead of ten. In putting forward the proposals we had in mind the possibility of the factory getting more orders and our holding on to the eight-hour day. The possibility in fact did occur later but I had left by that time and I don't know the outcome; I did hear that the management brought in new workers from Tver and sacked the local ones as malcontents.

However, the factory did not have contented workers for long. When the gendarmes were taking me into Yekaterinoslav, I noticed that the factory had shut down. It was lying idle because of the general crisis which had hit southern Russia....

About this time Morozov and I had discussions about the possibility of starting a local newspaper. We were given one hundred rubles to start it, but, of course, the main problem was where to get type. We set about looking for it and were not long in finding it; now the problem was how to get hold of it and make it our own property.

Apparently around the same period the idea was born of a paper for the whole southern district. I held several discussions with one of the intelligentsia on the matter; in fact we had a number of secret meetings to discuss this question.

Getting back to the winter of 1898-99. The distribution of leaflets during this period was badly hampered by intensive police activity; it was necessary to take even greater precaution than usual. Comparing this period with the days when we began leaflet distribution in Yekaterinoslav, when we had only three or four people working, now there were between twenty and thirty distributors and sometimes even more.

In these circumstances where we had so many comrades helping, we sent four out to cover one street with leaflets (two on each side). One, who carried nothing at all, walked in front to signal to the other in the event of danger; the second man followed on, drawing leaflets from his pockets or from a case, throwing them over the fence into yards, or over the yard gates.

If the street was quiet and the time late, the distributor would go right into the building and place the leaflets in the corridors, or stick them in the window-shutter, so that if the police were on the look-out they would not always find the leaflets. When the man in front noticed a guard and gave the signal, the one behind immediately stopped the distribution and continued unhurriedly on the way he was going.

When only three comrades were available, one of them acted as a look-out for the other two, walking up the middle of the street to watch both sides. Having finished one street, they went to another, and then to a third, and so on until all the leaflets were away.

The allocation of the leaflets for the whole area was in the hands of one person; he knew where everyone worked, and he appointed the time for the distribution to begin. And as soon as the set hour arrived there was a simultaneous appearance of workers with leaflets on all the streets of the area and the distribution commenced. Hardly an hour later the leaflets were all given out and the distributors were on their way home to sleep peacefully.

Only in bigger districts like Kaidaki was it necessary to stay out as long as two hours.

Once we were out with leaflets on a street in Kaidaki. I was a little behind the others: I had just gone up to a house to throw in a leaflet when the comrades in front noticed the patrol and warned me, but I went on with what I was doing. When the soldiers came nearer I feigned drunkenness, stopped and looked at them, and when they passed I hurried on and restarted distribution.

The other comrades had asked the patrol for protection saying they were afraid to go further up the street. When they were assured that no one was there, they also went forward and continued to throw the leaflets into the courtyards. It was only by exercising such care that for the whole of two years not one worker distributing leaflets in the streets or in the factories fell into the clutches of the police. And this so schooled us in the work of distribution that we were able to do it without fear.

Part of our leaflets were thrown through the windows of the soldiers' barracks, and near their camps; sometimes we took them to the brickworks, sticking them under the awning of the shed or under bricks, so that when the latter were being moved the workers would find them. In a word, there was no place where our leaflets were not to be found.

As I said already, by means of negotiation and contact with certain persons I managed to find a place where there was the printing type we needed. Naturally, I was delighted with my find and could hardly wait to tell Morozov. After giving the matter some thought we came to the conclusion that the sooner we took the type away from those who had it the better, as they were likely to be arrested and the type would be confiscated. I took on the responsibility of opening negotiations tactfully on the question of the type.

The persons concerned had a high opinion of themselves; they were a shallow crew who fancied themselves to be something they were not. I knew one of the owners of the type well enough and thought a lot of his ability as an agitator, but he was a chatterbox that I just could not stand, so I tried to avoid him as much as possible, although we used his influence in the artizans' organization.

He was always asking me to join this body because if something undesirable cropped up there I could help to put it right. Out of a sense of caution I declined the invitation. The more so because I was already up to the neck in work which demanded not an incidental and transient attitude to it but one that was attentive and serious.

Then he attempted to become a member of our workers' committee (Yekaterinoslav). He did not succeed here either and even when others tried to use pressure to get him on, they failed too.

This was the kind of person with whom I was to begin negotiations about the type. The first thing I met in this connection was the unexpected announcement that the type belonged not to them alone, but that there was another person involved, and in any case they were thinking about getting out a paper themselves.

This sudden turn almost floored me; the thought that they were not joking when speaking about issuing a paper really frightened me, the more so because I knew they lacked the ability and forces for it. Meantime for one reason or another they would hang on to the type.

Now we would have to bring all our skill into play, to negotiate with these persons today and with others tomorrow, but matters did not go well at all. Possession being nine points of the law, he who held the type counted himself the owner. Arguing over various plans for the publication of a paper, I found out from them that they owned nothing but the type. I volunteered to find the

equipment needed to print the paper, laying down the hard and fast condition to use their type to print a leaflet. This encouraged them: they agreed willingly to do me this favour.

Having got thus far, found the necessary type and got the negotiations going smoothly, we needed help from the town committee, but for some reason they made known to us, through their representative, that they disapproved of our connections with such people, saying that they themselves would get type in a certain place. The town representative said that his committee was very sceptical about the whole proposition.

Meanwhile, the time was near when we had to prepare a leaflet for May Day; we were determined at all costs to print this leaflet. The delegate from the town committee said it could be done well enough on the hectograph. The suspicion arose in my mind that the town committee had taken steps on their own behalf to get the type about which I had done so much negotiating.

Thinking about the possibility of the type being taken by the town comrades, Morozov and I decided there was no time to lose; we had to act quickly if we were going to outwit the town committee. I began to build a frame to hold the type. While I was making it in the factory the foreman noticed more than once that I was doing some job for myself; what it was he could not find out and because of the strained relations between us he did not inquire too closely in case it was a trick that might recoil on himself, or perhaps something even worse.

One way or another I finished the job. How to get it out of the factory was the next problem. I asked a foreman with whom I was acquainted to get it out; he did this in a most exemplary way, not knowing, of course, what the bars were for.

With the finished frame I made for the owners of the type, and I was just in time, because it was getting on

for April 18th, and cost what it may, the May Day leaflet just had to be a printed one. To our reasons for wishing to abandon the use of the hectograph another one was now added; we wanted to show the town committee the possibilities of printing by type, that it was quicker and not any more dangerous than the hectograph. And also that printed leaflets, even if not so well done, would look much better than hectographed leaflets.

When I reached agreement about receiving the type, the town committee consented to do all they could to help us, promising their co-operation if we required it. This was needed particularly in the matter of getting a roller to feed the ink on to the press; the town comrades had one, but it was too small.

April the 18th was the second day of Easter, and it was essential, therefore, to have the leaflets ready by then in order to get them out right away. Three weeks before Easter, the workers' committee at its meeting laid it down that the draft leaflet must be ready by the next meeting. All comrades, including the intelligentsia, were asked to prepare drafts (the rule was that each committee member write out his own draft and the committee would decide which was the most satisfactory and suitable for distribution—a very useful practice for us all).

As far as I can remember a week passed and no draft appeared from the intelligentsia for the reason, we were told, that a very good leaflet was being sent by the Party for distribution in our town.

We were very doubtful about this and decided to go ahead with our own. Three drafts were discussed at the committee meeting, two of them were considered to be suitable. We agreed to composite these two and they were handed to two members for editing, with Morozov responsible. Although Morozov had not finished his own draft on the May Day leaflet and was opposed to the two selected, he had to submit to the majority and edit the

leaflet, the final draft of which had to be ready within two or three days.

Exactly a fortnight remained before Easter; I had to start chasing people and do a lot of running around myself. First of all it was necessary to sort out the type. This was done in a comrade's room (one of the owners of the type). It wasn't reassuring to know that the man who had the type was known all over town and more than one person knew what he kept in his suitcase.

But the time was ripe; we couldn't look back now, and one long evening and night was enough for the dissembling job. The type was then tied in packages and returned to the suitcase, which did not even have a lock.

The edited leaflet, after having been read by the members of the committee, was taken by me to be set up. This took three days, the type was then fixed firmly into the frame and could be carried around easily from one place to another.

And then, in those feverish moments, we suddenly came up against one misfortune after another; first, a rumour started that Morozov and I wished to hold on to the type permanently. It came to the ears of the owners and annoyed them so much that they refused point-blank to let us use the type. To avoid meeting me to discuss the matter, they rarely appeared at their home; really, it was hard to understand such people, who, at the critical moment, had knocked the feet from under us so easily; I could not guess who, but someone had been playing tricks.

Along with this annoyance we had to mould rollers, but in spite of all my running around I could not find a round container of the right size. After a fruitless search I bought, finally, two porous pots used for electric batteries; these turned out to be useless because they broke before the stuff was set.

The compound we were using to mould the rollers consisted of ordinary domestic glue and treacle; it did not

turn out well for a long time and when poured into the container it would not set. I went to one of the comrades on the committee and asked him to try all he could to turn out the proper type of tube in the factory, even if he had to have trouble with the foreman of the shop while doing it.

Next day the comrade volunteered to work a night-shift; and so, in the deep of the night, when there was no foreman around to watch him, he worked like mad at his lathe and in a couple of hours he had fashioned a small and fairly well-turned cylinder with a tiny cone attached. Again the problem—how to get it out of the factory? Quick as thought, the comrade sped over to the fence, in a minute the roller was outside the factory and—in the early hours of the morning—in my room.

At noon I took it to Amur, a small place over the Dnieper where Morozov lived. On the hearth there was an assortment of containers filled with a compound of glue and treacle.

On the floor were other receptacles holding the newly moulded rollers; everywhere was the usual disorder associated with "state criminals." There were also handles and steel axles for the rollers, which had been made in yet another factory by a third member of the committee.

It was Saturday; we had exactly a week left; it was time to shake ourselves and work more energetically. I was unemployed then, so all my time was devoted to the printing preparations, but Morozov and the other comrades had extra pre-holiday work in the factories, and during the night had to work no less hard on the leaflets for May Day.

That day and overnight, after casting the rollers, I went home trusting that Morozov would attend to this matter next day; it was intended to hold our last meeting before Easter at his place.

On the Monday of Holy Week I went to buy three reams of paper which I took home; in the evening I brought the paper to the flat where the printing was to be done. That day, too, I bought a mirror that I'd been trying to find for a long time and at last I got one the right size and thickness. I bargained for it a good while because I wanted to get it as cheap as possible. After much wrangling I got the mirror, taken out of its frame, thus saving a ruble.

I bought another sheet of clear tin for the ink and took it home as well. All that remained now was to get the assembled type. I went to fetch it from the flat where we had sorted and set it. Apparently the owners considered it possible that the printing should be done at their flat, so long as they took part in it.

I should have said outright that this was impossible, but knowing they were not keen on giving us the type I had to use, not so much diplomacy, as to promise to do various things for them and especially to pledge my word of honour to return the type, which, of course, I did. After the prolonged and awkward negotiations I had managed to get them on my side and thereafter acquired not only the type assembled and fixed in the frame, but various fittings and other odds and ends.

We divided the load between the three of us; in order not to draw too much attention to ourselves we set off to my flat late in the evening: here we experimented with the press and corrected the proofs. The landlady who occupied the room next to mine seemed to have no suspicion of what dangerous undertaking was causing the noise from the metal plate and the movement of the rollers over the type.

The experiment was successful; I was satisfied with what we had achieved and sent my helpers off to their homes. It was already well into the night; knowing that the landlady slept nearby, on the other side of the wall,

and that at the slightest suspicion she would inform the police what mischief I was up to, and fearing to bring the spies on my trail, carefully and stealthily I placed everything under the bed, and in the suitcase, and still apprehensive that something would go wrong, I lay down to a troubled sleep.

On the following day, just as it was getting dark, the comrades and I took all the type and everything else needed and transported it on our shoulders to the flat occupied by a member of the committee where the work of printing could go on undisturbed. Only the rollers and the ink remained and these were brought from Morozov's. After many failures we finally managed to make two very good rollers; we were not afraid now that we would not be able to finish the job, because the rollers could be recast rather easily.

I think it was Wednesday when I set to work in the morning with the help of the landlady, first of all drawing the window curtains and locking the doors. Of course, it was slow going, but, nevertheless, we were getting somewhere and very soon the newly-printed leaflets were hanging up to dry on lines of thread. It made one feel good in heart and spirit to see the progress we were making.

In the evening a comrade arrived straight from work and then another came; the work went on at full speed all night. We worked cheerfully, joking and keeping our eyes on the press, learning as we progressed what defects had to be remedied. The type turned out to be pretty old and did not print as well as we had hoped; nevertheless, we could improve it. At the moment we had neither the time nor the money. Particularly, we were very short of the latter, because all we received from the town committee for the whole of the equipment was the sum of ten rubles with which we bought the paper and the mirror.

On Thursday I worked on alone, helped by the landlady; by four in the afternoon the comrades arrived with Morozov among them. I gave him the heavy task of turning the wooden roller, which was wrapped in canvas sacking, over the flat-bed. The roller was very light so that Morozov had to lean his whole weight on it to get any impression; it was heavy enough work, especially as it had to be done quickly.

This is how we worked: one laid on the ink and put pressure on the roller; another put in paper and lifted out each leaflet as it was printed; a third spread the leaflets out to dry and stacked the finished ones; a fourth either rested, or separated the leaflets into piles.

In the early hours of Good Friday morning we finished the printing; we collected the leaflets and folded them while one comrade put the committee's stamp on them. The landlady, who had been worried during these days, scraped the table and floor of spilled ink and washed the room out thoroughly. We dismantled the rollers and decided to bury the compound in the ground somewhere. In brief, everything was fine, and if the gendarmes did show up the room would be clear of everything suspicious.

Now we began to divide the leaflets into quantities according to districts; they were quickly put into piles of 200, 300, and 400—altogether we had nearly 3,000 leaflets. Then each comrade took the bundle earmarked for his district and left. Besides this, some of the leaflets were set aside for other places. There were ten districts all told; Morozov lived in Amur, and took away 300 leaflets for distribution. He was promised a number of helpers.

He went off with the leaflets to a friend's flat where he stayed until the late afternoon. That same evening I was informed that Morozov had been arrested at the railway station. Because of this it was essential to have the type removed immediately to the owner's flat, and collect the

leaflets for the other areas. We managed to get all this done without great difficulty.

The question now was: what had the gendarmes managed to get out of Morozov; would they now be on the alert and have traps set for the distributors? These were ticklish questions, but after discussing the situation we decided against postponement, and that the leaflets be scattered late on Saturday evening (beginning at 11.30 p. m.), so that the May Day leaflets would be picked up and read by those who were out early on Easter morning.

We also decided to exercise even greater caution during the distribution. Everything went off splendidly; not one comrade was caught. When I was coming home in the small hours, not far from my lodgings I ran into a group of soldiers on patrol. From their unsuspecting attitude I could see that they knew nothing about the leaflets lying in the courtyard of practically every building in the area. What explains this lack of vigilance on the part of the gendarmes?

Morozov told us later that he gave the police to understand that he had received the leaflets which were found on him from a person he did not know, who asked him to take them to a certain point in a grove near the railway bridge, on the edge of the woods. A meeting was to be held to decide what should be done with them.

Acting on Morozov's statement the gendarme chief (it was he who had prosecuted Morozov in Petersburg) from early morning set the gendarmes and part of the police to watch. They were all in plain clothes. He changed his own clothes too, the better to capture the Socialists who were supposed to be getting together.

Some time passed, but there was still no sign of a meeting anywhere; in fact there were few people about. Fearing that he might be recognized, the chief changed his clothes several times but this did not help him to catch the traitors red-handed.

Twilight grew into darkness; sitting beneath the bridge did not appeal to him any more; he felt foolish and ludicrous, and leaving a guard on for the night, he went home angry and affronted with the Socialists.

And that very night, throughout all Yekaterinoslav, in the districts, on the corners and back streets, the leaflets appeared in greater quantities than ever before. They were the same as those found on Morozov. The infuriated chief had Morozov brought in from prison; no sooner had the prisoner entered the room than the chief barked at him:

"You deceived me, you double-dyed scoundrel!"

"How? When?" asked Morozov, restraining his laughter.

"And who said yesterday there would be a meeting, wasn't it you?"

"Well, I wouldn't know, maybe it took place."

"How could it take place? I sat all day under a bridge waiting for it. I even changed my clothes three times, but not one rogue turned up. You made it all up!"

"I don't know, maybe, they postponed it."

"And how did these leaflets get all over the town?"

The gullible gendarme decided to search for the printing-press on which the leaflets had been run off, but he looked for it, not in Yekaterinoslav, but in Tver, and although on his instructions several raids were made and some people arrested in Yekaterinoslav, he could not find the press.

Secrecy was observed so completely only because those who had worked on the press were all, to the last man, tried and tested workers who had suffered imprisonment and were steeled in battle.

It is interesting that when the gendarmes searched Morozov's flat they found nothing except paper, although all the pots containing the compound and glue were in the flat, and besides there were other forbidden articles. To divert suspicion from Morozov that he had the leaflets for

distribution, we gathered in from various areas all the surplus leaflets we could find and scattered them in Amur; we carried this out without mishap.

Our work on the May Day leaflet came to an end, and by the time we said farewell to the printing-press, we had gained a lot of experience which, of course, would stand all of us in good stead. However, after the accidental arrest of Morozov, our affairs went from bad to worse. Every month comrades left the workers' committee; only one of the old members remained, and even he gravitated towards the town committee, which was then functioning satisfactorily. We held strictly to the principle of the need for the workers' committee and exerted every ounce of energy to prevent the break up of this committee to the detriment of the movement. Under no circumstances would we agree to sacrifice one committee to the advantage of the other.

I don't remember all the details which led to the strike on the railway serving our workshops, but they were something like the following.

June the 25th had been set aside in honour of Nikolai I, who had founded the first railway line in Russia. Until then, work stopped on this date at 2 p. m. and in some cases even at 12 noon, the workers receiving full pay for the whole day.

The management decided, however, to make a change; as they say, "to do homage and make a profit." They proposed that the workers attend a church service at 12 noon, return to work at 1.30 p.m. and work on till 6 p.m. Of course, if the management had not wanted to mark the occasion as a day of rejoicing, it would have been better to have kept quiet about it, or held the service in the workshop (which, need it be said, would have aroused a real celebration), and not invite the workers to go to church (an invitation that was more like an order), then perhaps they might have worked the whole day.

Generally the workers liked the tsar's holiday as a day of rest, but did not like to be dragged to church to pray for the tsar in their own free time, instead of in the employers' time, i.e., during working hours. This decision called forth such curses upon the heads of all the dead tsars and their retinue that they must have turned in their graves.

Here are the events of June 25th, 1899.

In the evening of June 24th it was announced that on the following day work would go on from 6.30 a.m. until evening, with a break for dinner; that after 12 noon a thanksgiving service would be held in the church to which all employees were invited. The announcement was greeted with an outburst of grumbling such as had not been heard for a long time past.

The workers were positively disgusted with the news; almost everyone declaring they would refuse to go if they were asked, and saying: "What is this, anyway, I work all day and for dinner I've to pray for the tsar? Do they really think we're such fools as to let this go by without protest?"

On his way home after work that evening of June 24, a comrade from this workshop came to my lodgings to look for me but I was not at home. On his own initiative, with the help of another comrade, he wrote urgently about twenty proclamations, using carbon paper for speed, and adding the signature of the Yekaterinoslav Committee (a name that had a big influence among the workers and always met with a good response).

In the morning they spread their sparse and hardly readable leaflets two or three to each shop. The leaflets worked like magic; every one was handed round and read in every shop until there was not a scrap left (when the committee tried to get one later we couldn't find a single copy).

The leaflet demanded that everyone down tools at exactly 12 noon; no one was to go to the church service, but to go home for dinner and not return to work in the afternoon. The majority were in full agreement with this demand; at 12 noon the workers, excepting a few who went to church, made their way home.

Our comrades were not slow to act, however: very soon a chalked notice appeared on the workgates strongly warning anyone who dared to work in the afternoon that they would live to regret the day. Below this was another equally menacing admonition to those bold enough to try rubbing the chalk off the gates.

About one o'clock a crowd of about fifty workers gathered at the gates, but the chalked threat knocked any idea of work out of the heads of those who were so minded. Moreover, the works' guard came out and made no attempt to carry out the orders of the timekeeper and the police to wipe out the chalk.

They were greeted with cat-calls, for the sentiments were definitely on the side of the written warnings, whose authors were being praised, and were still among the crowd, stirring them up.

The last hooter went, but the gates remained closed. Finally a gendarme officer appeared and opened the gates, but only a few seemed to have any desire to work. Those who went in did not feel too happy about it. They were no sooner inside than the same gendarme put them out again and closed the gates and all the workshops until the following morning.

Very seldom did it happen in the course of a year that the railway workshops were so completely idle. Even on Saturdays and Sundays, or on any big holiday, there was always overtime work, but now, what do you think, all the shops were without a living soul in them, and this spoke volumes. The committee drew together all the information necessary to determine the moods of the workers;

there was a feeling that something special was about to happen, and everyone waited for the following day.

Next day the wave of militancy was still growing; no real work was done in the factory. Most of the benches and lathes were idle. The carriages and engines were motionless. Nobody wanted to work. Then a notice was put up stating that payment would be made for June 25th only for half a day and not the full day. This was the last straw; first a part of the workers and then all of them downed tools and went home.

The committee issued a large number of leaflets; the police and gendarmes were busy with their provocative measures. Work restarted; however, the fighting mood did not die down all week, over Sunday or into the following week. During this time the police and gendarmes were going round noting the names of the more militant workers. Finally the excitement began to subside: everything portended peace and quiet, but it was all smashed by the gendarmes themselves.

At the end of the day-shift one evening the workers were hurrying from all sides towards the gates. As the first of them were nearing the gates, an officer, with a drawn sword in his hand, came running to meet them, shouting: "Stop!" The workers, stunned into silence, found themselves surrounded by armed soldiers and then, as if they had come out of the ground, police officers appeared and started to separate the workers into two groups. Those whose names had been listed were put to one side under armed guard; the others were allowed to leave the factory where they ran into more soldiers brandishing their rifles and shouting orders, "to the left," or "to the right."

The workers were kept on the move as they came out and were herded as far from the gates as possible. Near the railway line groups of them were standing about waiting until the soldiers brought out the arrested work-

ers to take them to jail, or some such place; it looked as if a bloody clash would take place in an attempt to rescue the prisoners.

However, the gendarmes, to avoid trouble, pretended that they were holding the prisoners in a workshop near the gates, while in fact they were hurrying them, hemmed in by soldiers, in an entirely different direction; so in a roundabout way the arrested men were taken through the town to prison.

It was an hour later before the workers heard of their comrades' fate. All felt tremendously disappointed and were boiling with resentment, but what to do next? They moved on to a small square near the corner of Tram-Car Street; someone threw a stone through a window, smashing the glass. The crowd was in a mood to wreck a building where lived their own fellow workers, among whom were some Jewish people. One of our committee members was in the crowd and put a stop to the idea, shouting, "Our own brothers live there."

Recognizing that the comrade was right, the crowd moved away from the building. Coming towards them was a young Jewish lad. Evidently not suspecting trouble he came on until one of the crowd hit him. Things would have gone badly for him had not our comrade again rushed up and shouted to leave him alone, that the lad was innocent and in fact suffered more from police persecution at that moment than they themselves.

"What are you doing? You came to free our brothers from the police and the gendarmes. They've taken our comrades to prison. That's where you should go if you want to free them!"

With loud shouts the crowd made their way towards the prison, escorted by police who sent on warnings of the direction the workers were taking. And when the prison was reached the troops were already lined up outside and our comrades were in jail. Just then one of the com-

mittee members was arrested, thanks to a rash action on his part which pin-pointed him among the mass of workers. There were no special incidents between the workers and the troops, but the police, pushing from all sides, kept trying to disperse the crowd.

It was a long time before the bitterness of the workers died down. The prisoners were not detained for long: within a week or two almost all of them were released without any special consequences. The comrades who were employed in the railway workshops and who distributed the leaflets, were not suspected, so in fact we lost very little. One member of the committee was gone and it was his own fault; being over-enthusiastic, he had not kept a firm enough grip on himself in a critical moment. The other committee member who had been in the crowd the whole time did a splendid job right through. When it was all over it was like the calm after a storm.

It was summer, so the committee meetings took place in the open air at various points. I remember one occasion when we met near a timber yard on the banks of the Dnieper in the centre of the town. We didn't feel very easy sitting there in full view of the passers-by, especially when we had to have recourse now and then to pencil and paper.

Failing to find a more secluded spot amid the planks and logs of wood, we climbed into an empty barge and opened a handy cabin; having disposed ourselves to our satisfaction we got down to discussing our business and had no further trouble in finishing the agenda.

On another occasion we hired a boat and rowed out to the environs; the next meeting was held somewhere else, so that every Sunday we continued, with great satisfaction, to hold our meetings and discuss our work. The question of more printed leaflets came up regularly, because after the May Day leaflets we had to start using the hectograph again; the town committee would not pro-

duce them any other way. In any case we did not have a suitable flat in which to do the printing.

Another comrade and I managed to find a suitable place for printing among the bushes on the river bank, well away from the town, but the town committee would not co-operate by giving us their type.

We members of the committee were not the only ones expressing dissatisfaction with the hectographed leaflets, because rank-and-file workers were not happy about them either, as the following incident shows. In one factory (the tube-rolling works), after reading our leaflets, workers remarked that they were hard to read and decided to take up a collection, which came to ten rubles and some kopeks, towards the improvement of the printing—and for that alone.

No sooner had the wave of unrest in the railway workshops died away, than the whole attention of the Yekaterinoslav workers was riveted on the outbreak in Mariupol. And it was really something to talk about. The information from there had everyone on edge; it was annoying that there was such a long delay in having it confirmed. Our own people were under arrest; besides, it was urgent that leaflets be got out not only for Yekaterinoslav but even more so for Mariupol itself. This was done; the leaflets met with a terrific response from the workers.

It is important to bear in mind that when leaflets are issued regularly in a given place, they should be up to date and explain in detail what is happening, neither exaggerating nor lessening the importance of the events. Once you suceed in winning the confidence of the workers in the leaflets, then during strikes or disputes they will agree all the more willingly with all that's said in them, and this is a lever by means of which the movement is impelled forward towards its goal.

At the beginning when we had very few people taking a direct part in propaganda and agitation, it was much

easier to see that each person followed the rules of conspiracy, but once the circle of workers taking part in the movement began to widen, there were more blunders by individual comrades. In spite of these mistakes the gendarmes rarely got to know anything in detail about one or other person and even less about the movement as a whole.

I was often annoyed when an irresponsible worker talked about me or anyone else to his young mates, and on meeting strangers, to find that, though I did not know them, they seemed to know all about me. Apart from losing the sense of caution, such a person, if he is fiery and impetuous, displays a bravado that is surprising, to say the least of it.

For instance, during working hours one young worker read an illegal book quite openly to a group of workers in the workshop and when the foreman came up and tore it out of his hands the lad didn't turn a hair, but regretted only the loss of his book. This might have led to a load of trouble had the man not happened to be a good friend of ours—even if he was a foreman—and out of friendship would not do us a dirty trick.

Another worker found a platform and began to address the workers right in the workshop. And it was only because almost all there were either sympathizers, or took a direct part in the movement, that they kept their mouths shut about such a foolhardy escapade.

This was all reported to me but there was nothing I could do about it because we had grown considerably in numbers and I had little time to spend in talking to such hotheads. They either would not listen to others or just ignored them completely and this led to more dissatisfaction which I had to settle afterwards.

About this time a new group was organized in Nizhnedneprovsk by a worker. From the start this group came into conflict with our committee and in no way showed

any desire to be co-operative (particularly this worker). We found it necessary to start a struggle with them; at first only with arguments, but this failed to move them. The group wished to call themselves a committee and to issue leaflets specially for the Nizhnedneprovsk Franco-Russian Co. workshops.

Then we were compelled to move into action in that area in order to paralyze, as far as possible, the group's influence among the workers, as it was damaging the committee. Besides, we were apprehensive about the lack of secrecy in this group, which could easily provoke the police into taking action that would involve us, too, and in which the whole cause would suffer.

They had created their own fund and called themselves the Dawn. It was evident that both they and the workers around them had enough money, which they began to spend on leaflets. They would have liked to issue a leaflet every day, or at least once a week, but their lack of experience constantly hindered them from establishing even elementary equipment; part of their money was simply thrown away.

I called a meeting of their group and asked particularly that their leader should attend because he was systematically refusing to meet me. And when I managed to get something done, he followed right behind me trying to wreck my work. He was in a good position to practise these tricks because I could get to Nizhnedneprovsk only occasionally.

His unreasonable attitude was partly explained by his aversion to the intelligentsia whom he was absolutely opposed to meeting and for some reason he counted me among them. He did not come to this meeting either, so I had to talk with the other members of the Dawn without him. I explained how impossible it was for them to work separately from the committee, the reckless way they were acting, the waste of money that had been col-

lected; finally that we would refuse to give them any literature and that they would find themselves poorly off with only leaflets to read. Part of the members were on my side even before the meeting.

I proposed that their group join the committee and promised that they would then get literature and guiding help in their activity from the intelligentsia, but that they should not issue anything separately from the committee. The meeting agreed fully with all these points and, indeed, with everything I said. After this meeting one of the intelligentsia arrived and went to work along the lines agreed to; the breach between the two bodies was healed.

This took place just prior to the closure of this factory (see above) and just when a responsible leadership was needed because conflicts with the management were taking place practically every day.

Let's return now for a minute to the co-operative store.

Three months had passed during which less and less attention was paid to the store by the main founder-members including myself. As I explained already we had very little capital at the start of this venture. There had been no income apart from a few kopeks put in by the old man himself, who not only took nothing out, but, indeed, constantly laid out what remained of his wages to keep the business going.

He complained about the indifference of the other principals of the scheme; that he alone fulfilled all the duties regarding the purchase of stock, travelling into town, and attending to the store every available minute. It was clear that he was very depressed over the whole business, and on top of all this his domestic circumstances were no less embarrassing.

I could see quite clearly now that the store would make its way if the person directly in charge of it knew

that he was working for himself and not for somebody else. But it was the old man's wife who helped in the shop and she did so only in customary obedience to her husband's wishes. She got to know the whole story and was not enthusiastic about it at all. Gradually we became convinced that the business was going to fail.

Three months went by, and the five of us met again to discuss the question we could avoid no longer: should we wind up the business or stick it out a bit longer? The answer to both questions was—money. Matters stood like this: the rent had to be paid and if the store had to be closed we would forfeit fifty rubles—that was the first thing. On the other hand the shop had eighty rubles of stock out on credit which it was impossible to get in (to refuse credit was out of the question because the other stores gave it).

Besides, as was explained, several traders sold their goods cheaper than ours, sometimes at a loss or at cost-price. This completely bewildered our storekeeper but after some inquiry he found out the reason for it. It turned out that while undercutting us they were also cheating their customers by giving short weight, often filching as much as three ounces out of a pound. Although we discovered the reason for the competition there was nothing we could do about it. It was understandable why the majority of the customers were unwilling to buy in our store, if next door they saw the same goods going at a lower price, never suspecting that these cheaper goods were dearer in the long run.

All we experienced proved that, as it stood, the business was a dead loss; the busy thoroughfare where it was situated would not help us to get out of the mess. So, letting our stuff out on credit brought about such a position, that just before pay-day we were run out of stock. Only when our customers got their wages did the incoming money enable us to buy in more stock. In a

word, our store was just staggering along from one day to another with the constant threat of ruin hanging over it.

Now we had to find a way out of the dilemma; it was also desirable that we find a solution to this difficult problem that would be fair to all concerned. The biggest creditors at that particular moment were the old man and his very best friend, so that if the store had to be closed they would stand to lose the most. After taking a closer look at the situation we came to the conclusion that it was impossible to continue trading on co-operative lines, and that if the store ceased trading it would lose fifty rubles' deposit, and there was also the real risk of losing the eighty rubles' credit. We had stock to the value of about one hundred rubles—so what should we do?

After a short discussion we proposed that the old man take over the store as a private concern on condition that he repay the sum taken out of our social fund, and also the amount on the promissory note, at the rate of not less than ten rubles a month. Although the old man seemed unwilling to agree to our proposal, there was no better way out. He accepted, but laid it down beforehand that he should not make any payment during the first two or three months. We agreed to this and so our co-operative store passed into private hands.

There were some disagreeable consequences for myself as one well acquainted with the sentiment behind the enterprise. Many people had heard, of course, that the store was based on co-operative principles, but what these were they did not know fully; in fact when they did find out it was already too late because the store by then had been transferred to private hands and its activity was no longer subject to outside control.

Long afterwards people were still openly accusing the old man of opening a store on money taken from social

funds, which he was suspected of dishonourably converting to his own use. And if proof were needed to justify these accusations surely it was enough that he had become a foreman, the people would say (he was a foreman at that time).

It was understandable why the old man was very indignant about these charges and he often complained bitterly about them. I tried as hard as I could to impress on our friends how unjust these charges were, but somehow I could not convince them altogether. I continued to keep up friendly relations with the old man, and once asked him to give a friend of mine a job. He agreed but apparently later repented his weakness.

The fact was that this new worker was a fellow who had a high opinion of himself, and while he would listen to me, he ignored everyone else; generally he was not a very likeable person. I had been told the whole story, so when I met the man again I spoke to him about his attitude. The outcome was that he had a row with the old man who was his foreman. In the heat of the argument the old man had to stand a mass of insults, and he had no other course but to order the comrade out of the factory; then he gave him a fortnight's notice.

I had to go and see the old man about this matter, and try to convince him in a friendly way to change his mind. I insisted that he do not dismiss the comrade, but he was equally determined to stick to his decision. I remember so well how this elderly, married man wept in front of me, a much younger man than himself. He tried to explain why he could not reinstate the comrade, while at the same time he himself felt how impermissible it was to use such measures against workers.

All this was a graphic illustration of the moral that one can't serve two masters, a point of which he himself soon became convinced. He had often told me of secret meetings that had taken place between the foremen and

the director, and the questions they discussed. In fact he remained the same old fellow as when I first met him. But this was my last meeting with him. He repaid me the remainder of the money I had collected to start the co-operative store.

In leaving him I saw that in his relations with myself and with the cause in general, over the two years I had known him, he had always been completely honest. But I also saw his tears and his misery and many things besides. Much spare time would have had to be spent in personal talks with him, if any benefit were to be derived from him, and in order that he might become courageous and self-reliant. But times were busy and every free moment was precious; in any case we needed people who were stronger politically than the old man, people capable of giving everything, including life itself, to the cause. And so we parted as good friends, though now and then since I have had to seek his help.

Soon after this the employers made a big drive to cut wages; the old man did not know where to turn, even his own friends were against him, to say nothing of the man he had wanted to sack. Altogether it was a very unhappy situation.

One day I had to have a meeting with a close friend who worked under the old man. When we met on the street he expressed general dissatisfaction with the old man, although he was a friend of his; he asked my advice.

It seemed to me that if a foreman supported workers in dispute, however much under cover, he was worth cultivating. But if he was always trying to stifle protests and from necessity yielded even only partially to the management, giving rise to a sort of resentment instead of well-deserved hatred, such a man was more harmful to the movement than an open enemy.

Therefore, I suggested that a private meeting of about five or six comrades be convened, that the foreman be

invited, and that the question be put to him there, in a friendly way, that he should give up the foreman's job. Later I learned that he had left the foreman's job and even was in prison for three months. This ends my story about the old man.

That winter our committee had changed so much that only one of the old members remained; the rest were new-comers to the Yekaterinoslav Committee.

At the beginning of autumn, 1899, there was a big rush on to issue a new printed newspaper. I knew all about it personally, but what I did not know was where it would be printed; I had a notion it would be done in Yekaterinoslav itself; also I did not know the name of the proposed paper. This was all kept a closely guarded secret.

I remember a meeting of the town committee where several articles were read over—one of them was on the labour movement in Yekaterinoslav; there was also a poem, "Let Tyrants Rage." It was all very heartening. At this meeting the question was raised of sending a delegate to a Socialist congress, but there was only a preliminary exchange of opinion on the matter; the election itself depended on certain future circumstances. This was at the end of 1899.

Looking back over the previous year or so the general growth of the movement in 1898 and 1899 was fairly high. To some extent the workers had had enough of general proclamations and were demanding more serious literature and the improvement of the technical side particularly. Badly hectographed leaflets were less willingly read. Our readers were more critical of our work and, of course, would have been all too ready to help if the work had been less conspiratorial. It was time to abandon the old method of printing and think out a new way. There was general agreement that leaflets had outlived their time and done all that could

be expected of them. Now everyone was saying we needed a newspaper, richer in content than leaflets.

And so, finally, in January, 1900, the long-awaited paper came out—*The Southern Worker*. Part of it was read out at the meeting of the workers' committee. The members wanted to welcome the new arrival with a celebration and a few drinks; we decided when and where to distribute the paper. Of course, every worker took the paper with great interest and, as taught by the leaflets, was at special pains to see that it did not fall into the hands of the police or any of the foremen.

The workers in the rolling mill of the Bryansk works got a copy of the paper and expressed their surprise at its contents in this way:

"Look, it's like a real newspaper! It's got news and letters!"

And off they went to find a quiet spot to read it.

They remembered this first paper for a long time afterwards; it raised their hopes because they could see that in spite of arrests the activity, far from falling away, had become more intense and bold.

It should be said that during a period of over two years the workers had been educated on the leaflet type of literature, and in all this time there had been no arrests among the workers themselves; although in some way arrests would not have been a bad thing as they would have schooled the workers to such experiences and they would not have been so completely confounded, as they seemed to be everywhere when unexpected arrests took place.

It was bad, of course, when one of the leadership was arrested; it put a brake on the activity, something we cannot permit. As they say, work yourself to a standstill if you like, but don't lose sight of the fact that neither you nor your work must suffer from whatever cause.

At the beginning of winter I suspected that I was under surveillance and decided to be more careful in my movements. The gendarmes at that time carried out a search of my room but they found nothing and released me—an action the gendarme chief was to regret later. I expected another raid any day and knew that it would bring only the worst results this time, but to go away was out of the question at the time, so I began to count the days I had left to stay in Yekaterinoslav.

Finally the long-awaited day arrived. Taking my suitcase, which was already packed, and trying not to attract the landlady's attention, I got outside with it and hailed a cab. Only then did the landlady learn of my departure. She guessed correctly where I was going and as soon as I'd left she went to the police-station and reported the matter. She was thanked for her trouble and the information was all taken down.

The train rushed along the Nikolayevsky railway approaching Petersburg; soon I would see the familiar streets and meet the people. In my pocket was a real passport, belonging to a reliable person, enabling me to go anywhere without fear.

Thus end my recollections of Yekaterinoslav. I have made no attempt to write a systematic and profound account of the moods of the workers there. Such an effort would have required an entirely different kind of presentation.

The present recollections regarding both Petersburg and Yekaterinoslav I bequeath to the *Iskra* for their exclusive use. They are for publication only with the *Iskra*'s consent and with myself separately.

Perhaps sometime I shall write my recollections about central Russia, but not here.

Appendix

CORRESPONDENCE

from

I. V. BABUSHKIN

Published
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Orekhovo-Zuyevo (the town of Nikolskoye). Before describing the conditions in the Savva Morozov hospital I think it is necessary to say a word or two about the local situation. We Orekhovo-Zuyevo workers, through the medium of the *Iskra*, wish to acquaint our fellow workers, as well as workers of other towns and trades, with the monstrous conditions under which we live. There is no need to repeat that every thinking worker should, as a matter of course, be interested in labour questions, but there are also many other people, though not workers themselves, who are nevertheless concerned about these matters and are sympathetic to the working-class movement.

No matter how much the infamous priests, with their crafty schemes and sophistry, try to keep us in ignorance while they work hand in glove with the capitalists and the officials of the Russian government, they can't prevent the workers from seeing the wretched nature of their conditions of slavery.

There are up to 25,000 workers employed by the two manufacturers, Vikula and Savva Morozov, in the small town of Nikolskoye; the whole population of Orekhovo is 40,000, living in an area of roughly four square miles. For such a large and densely-populated place the labour movement is quiet and lethargic. This inactivity is

caused mainly by an unsatisfied hunger for knowledge. We have no literature such as is commonly met with in the capitals and other big towns; workers from the towns rarely come here and so we are kept in the dark about what is going on elsewhere. We lack the courage and partly the ability to undertake the work ourselves.

Here is a brief sketch of the order of things here and our material situation. I describe these without any exaggeration and in full accordance with the facts.

We have two hospitals, one belonging to Vikula and the other to Savva Morozov. I shall try to give you a picture of conditions in the hospital for the Savva Morozov employees. It is situated close to the Morozov iron-foundry and the workers' living quarters (the barracks). It is an unhealthy area to live in, let alone for an hospital. Morozov leaves the running of the hospital in the hands of a physician named Bazelevich who pays rent for it. Dr. Bazelevich's attitude to his patients is equivalent to that of a butcher.

He doesn't work for nothing; he is skilled in the art of flaying the hide off every exhausted worker who gets into his clutches. There is neither tea nor sugar in the hospital; boiling water is available but only until 6 p.m. The food is of poor quality and there's not enough even of that. Supper consists of sour cabbage soup or a kind of gruel. The patients are literally starving.

Only those patients who have relatives and friends to help them get enough to eat. Because of the half-starved condition of his patients Bazelevich does not ban the bringing in of food of any kind, so relatives visiting their sick kinsfolk fetch in sour cabbage, pickled herring, brown bread and *kvass*, in other words anything eatable.

The patients have to eat four or five at a time out of the one dish. The bed linen is always in a filthy condition; at any time one can see unsightly stains on the

sheets and pillow-cases. Here's how one worker described a visit he made to the hospital:

"I went to the hospital one day as a visitor. As I approached my friend's bed my attention was drawn to a patient lying in the next one. He was quite a young man and wore a long dirty shirt inside short grimy pants; he had on different-coloured socks (one white, and one red). He was suffering from a leg complaint.

"While I was talking to my friend the lad stared at me with a hungry, exhausted look in his eyes and finally cried out, 'For the love of Christ, give me a piece of bread, I'm starving, because no one comes to see me.' "

The treatment given in this hospital is scandalous—there's only one medicine, a cheap powder mixed in water. Bazelevich very seldom examines the patients. He has two doctors working for him and apart from dispensing medicine he does nothing himself.

There is a maternity ward which is remarkable only for one thing—its lack of attention to the patients. The women are taken in only a day or two before the confinement, on the plea that they come early only to eat the owner's food. In January of this year there was a disgraceful case when the midwife refused to let a pregnant woman into the hospital. The woman was only a short distance on her way home when she gave birth to her child on the street.

So you see, comrades, how ghastly is the situation in the Morozov hospital. Our health and strength are being sapped in the interests of the Morozov millions. Morozov is getting richer while we are compelled to eke out our last days on a crust of bread. Well, and what happens when we land in the alms-house? I'll tell you in my next letter what one may expect there.

(*Iskra*, No. 4, May, 1901.)

* * *

We are informed from *Ivanovo-Voznesensk*, that numerous small-scale industrial disputes are going on there—an indication that the crisis is stimulating the workers' demands and that the agitational activity of the Social-Democrats is having an effect.

After the Easter holidays twelve workers who were discharged for "misconduct" from the Zubkov textile mill demanded and received from the owner two weeks' pay in lieu of notice as provided by statute.

As usual, the factory inspector not only refused to support the legitimate demands of the workers but tried to scare them off by shouting and hurling abuse at them. Only their persistence, and a threat to take their complaint out of the inspector's hide, made this "defender of the law" do his duty.

In the factory of Dmitry Burilin the workers defeated an attempt by the owner to deprive them of the holiday on May the 8th (commemoration day of Ivan Bogoslov), until then considered an idle day in this factory. The women-workers here were unsuccessful when they tried to get an increase of wages.

On June 4, all the workers in the Garelin works went to the factory inspector to demand the removal of a timekeeper with whom they were completely dissatisfied. The demand was put so strongly that the inspector advised the management to accede to it and this was done.

Two hundred workers in the Kalashnikov foundry had their rates cut, resulting in a 50 per cent reduction in their wages. On May 15, the dispute between them and the management became very sharp. When receiving their monthly pay, seventy or so of the moulders declared that they would not accept an agreement based on the management's proposals and demanded a return to the previous agreement of a six-monthly hiring (instead of monthly) and special winter rates. The management

rejected the moulders' demands and threatened to bring in workers from other towns.

The moulders agreed unanimously not to renew the hire; they addressed their complaint to the factory inspector with a request that he act as mediator in the dispute. The factory inspector said he would have nothing to do with the matter on the grounds that the owner was entitled to alter the existing system of hiring and the piece-rates if he wished.

The management then started to recruit workers from Shuya and Moscow. Ten workers were signed on in Moscow, but they were not told anything about the strike. They had a promise of good wages: 75 to 80 and more rubles a month. But when the Muscovites arrived in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, and discovered what role they were to play, they told the local workers that they had been deceived and if they had known about the strike they would not have come.

From then on complete solidarity was established between the workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Moscow; the Moscow workers went to the factory inspector complaining about the action of the owner. The management, afraid of complications, immediately sent one of the disgruntled moulders back to Moscow.

Other moulders were hired in Shuya, but as soon as they heard of the strike they refused to go. Then the management turned over part of their urgent orders to a firm in Shuya, the management of which was related to the owners of the Kalashnikov factory. The workers here approached the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Committee of the Social-Democratic Party to use their influence with the Shuya workers. The Party Committee issued a leaflet to the workers in the Shuya factory who went on strike demanding that no orders be accepted from Kalashnikov.

The management agreed to the proposal and requested the workers to continue working until the arrival of

the owner. When he came he gave the workers a "treat" of vodka, but those who remained out before his return were either sacked or fined.

The Kalashnikov strike lasted about ten days finishing with a partial concession—a rise up to the winter rates. The Muscovites went home after the Kalashnikov workers had made a collection to help them on the road. In the factory stores, writes our correspondent, the local workers got acquainted with Muscovites and saw for themselves that the economic position of the workers here is a lot worse than in other towns.

It is obvious that these displays of protest could not pass without interference by the tsarist authorities. In the recent period, we are told, the police have been taking a keen and watchful interest in the workers' movements; on May the 1st, there was not a single spot where the police were not to be seen. During the night of May 17/18, the gendarmes made a sudden swoop and arrested 19 workers.

The following are among those arrested: Lyapin, Goloukhov, Belov, Korolyov, Philippov, Zharov, Barinov, Bogolapov, Mokruyev, Vorobyov, Sokolov, and Garavin. The prisoners are held either in the local jail or in the factory guardroom. Many were pulled in for questioning and three of those were detained. The case is being handled by the police chief and the captain of the gendarmes who act very stupidly, sometimes arresting men who are illiterate.

We found out an interesting fact that just a short time before the arrests, one of the prisoners, Barinov, had been invited to meet the police chief who proposed that Barinov take up service in the gendarmerie in the capacity of a spy. Barinov declined on the excuse that he was too well known and that the workers would soon put an end to him. The police chief replied by offering

him two or three revolvers for self-protection, but this also did not tempt Barinov.

Two days later he was invited to the gendarmerie to see the captain who offered him five rubles more than the police chief had proposed (the latter's offer was 15 rubles) and asked Barinov to point out the leading figures in the movement. Barinov again refused. So now he is under arrest, probably on the suspicion that he himself is the leader.

We don't know if Barinov regrets not getting the 15 rubles but there's no doubt that the police chief and the gendarme captain were sorry that, for 15 rubles, they did not get to know the leader of the movement.

You are requested to beware of one Kolichev, a clerk in the Garelin factory (dark, round-shouldered, deep voice). While under arrest he told all he knew and was the cause of many arrests.

* * *

From *Shuya* comes news of scandalous happenings in the dye works, textile and spinning mills belonging to Pavlov (nearly 3,000 workers). The owner and his sons are profligates in the most literal meaning of the term; indeed, one of the sons is so debauched that he is on the edge of madness; he is in this state of mental unbalance through having acquired a dreadful disease.

Because of this no young girl feels safe from these outrageous and shameless representatives of Russian capitalism, and pillars of the Russian government. The owners specially employ several women whose job it is to procure young girls for the masters. Indeed, Pavlov has created his own type of harem from among his women-workers. With the example of the owner and his foul brood before them, the foremen and office personnel

allow themselves to commit similar abominations. There are many lathes in the factory lying idle and covered with matting because the owner won't take on men for fear of trouble, and women generally are not strong enough to work these machines.

The heart of every girl and woman there beats with trepidation because of what is happening in the Pavlov factory.

* * *

From the same town we received the following report from our correspondent: We have had a number of raids here recently and some people have been arrested. It all happened during the night; now the captain of the gendarmes has a whole case on his hands. People are arrested elsewhere because illegal books and newspapers have been found on them, but here they arrest you for reading books censured by themselves. When the culprits are called in for questioning, the gendarme captain usually inquires:

"What are you doing with this?"

"I bought it to read."

"And why do you spend money on this instead of a book on the lives of the saints?" Or, "Why don't you sleep in the evening instead of reading?" Or, "Why don't you spend your time the way I do, for example?"

This captain drinks with Pavlov until they look more like dirty pigs than human beings, then in this state they kiss each other and generally make an exhibition of themselves on the street before an outraged public. For just such occasions Pavlov orders one of his pimps (he has a few in the factory) to procure a young girl for him—just as if he were ordering a chicken.

And this is done by an upholder of the Russian state, and a representative of the gendarmerie; so to protect themselves they try to keep the working people in ignorance, and a worker can't go along the street with a book under his arm in case a policeman might snatch it from him and look it over, saying, "What kind of book is this?" This happens quite often near the library.

Once the capitalist Pavlov, the gendarme captain, and a paragon of the Russian inquisitorial priesthood, named Yevlampy, went out a good number of miles from Shuya, with the aim of drinking themselves stupid, and that's just what they did (there were others with them, of course). They began to create a scandal and there was almost a brawl.

Then the others insisted that the priest Yevlampy dance the *trepak* in his cassock; the priest was drunk, became obstinate and refused to dance for anyone. His friends got furious with him and sent him away. He walked five miles on his way home to Shuya (it's a wonder he didn't fall into a ditch), and only on the sixth mile a carriage sent much later caught up with him and conveyed him the rest of the way home.

* * *

From *Orekhovo-Zuyevo* we are informed: On March 19, many arrests were made in Nikolskoye. Rudakov was picked up but released after a few days. Raids were carried out at the house of Ivanov, a weaver, and at the home of a cleaner named Agafonov. There were rumours that Solntsev's flat had also been searched.

The reason for the raids, as we have been told, was information given by the spy and provocateur Nitkin (his real name is Dmitriyev). This Dmitriyev was brought in by the new director of Vikula Morozov's fac-

tory, Skobelev, some eight months ago. He takes his orders from Skobelev and receives money for expenses.

Dmitriyev-Nitkin lives among the workers in the barracks. Description: age 33, height above average, stout build, prominent forehead, dull-grey eyes, soft-spoken, in conversation his brow creases noticeably, has a sullen look.

(*Iskra*, No. 6, July, 1901.)

* * *

From *Bogorodsk* (the Moscow province) a local worker writes to us:

There are, of course, many working-class centres in Russia, in places such as Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Kiev, and Kharkov, where workers have access to knowledge and where socialism can find its way to the workers' quarters; there are many class-conscious workers in these centres capable of building their own strong and consistent movement. And they have the assistance of the intelligentsia.

But there are other places in Russia where socialism finds greater difficulty in penetrating the workers' centres and where knowledge is a fettered formality. Here there is no effort to satisfy the cultural needs of the workers for whose entertainment there is either vodka, sold by the boss (it is now a government monopoly), or their own *balalaika* playing, or dancing.

Such places remind one of a stagnant pond; vegetation grows to the surface and sinks again to the bottom, settling there to form a slimy mass which drags into itself everything that comes its way. Glukhov manufacturing works (near Bogorodsk) is not unlike this.

There is no intellectual life worth speaking about and it is difficult to continue one's education even if one did have a little to start with.

The intelligentsia are absent, i.e., if we do not count among the "intelligentsia" such people as public officials, etc. They have had some education but cannot be included among the intelligentsia; they are carefully selected and endowed with the title "reliable." One seldom meets educated workers; in fact, at the slightest sign of protest against oppression out you go; suspects are not sent here. That is one reason why we have no literature, neither legal nor illegal.

If a worker does come here from a big town and thinks to do propaganda work, he will soon attract the attention of the management which will show that it can exercise summary justice by discharging him immediately and evicting him from his home, which is the property of the factory. Here we would like to say something about these factory dwellings.

The factory owner, Zakhar Morozov, has a men's artel (single men) with some 800 workers, and a similar one for women. Apart from this there is the barracks to accommodate married people. The men's artel takes up the whole of the three-storey barracks. The place is steam-heated and has ventilation, but this does not improve the position of the tenants.

The accommodation is so cramped that the like of it would not be met with in soldiers' barracks, an hospital or in a prison. The bed is four feet eight inches broad; a board is fixed down the centre dividing the bed in two; there are either two mattresses, or two stuffed bags.

On the average there are more than 100 sleeping in a dormitory. Between the beds there is a space of about 2½ ft. At the head of the bed is a small table with two drawers to hold clothes, tea and sugar. Not everyone has a locker. There are neither stools, chairs nor benches,

only the bed to sit on. When everyone is in there are four persons lying head to head; conversation is impossible unless you don't care if your neighbour hears you.

The accommodation is supposed to be free of charge, but the sum of two kopeks for every ruble earned (three kopeks for married couples) is deducted from the wages. The common lavatories are in a shameful state; they are not even separated from the dormitories by a main wall. The dining-room on the lower floor is right up against the lavatories, and as the firm is not over-anxious to spend money keeping the lavatories clean, the effect in the dining-room of such a neighbour is best left to the imagination.

In 1899 the workers demanded the allocation of more living space in the barracks. The firm agreed, then hung up a notice indicating the normal cubic content of air-space needed by one person (seven cubic feet). While putting this into effect the owners quickly removed 60 of the "malcontents" from among the workers, following which the regulations regarding air-space as shown in the notice were again violated.

The family barracks consist of small rooms holding four or five families (13 to 15 persons). The barracks are very dirty and the firm compels the tenants to paper the walls of the room at their own expense.

The Alexandrovsky barracks are contained in an ordinary three-storey building which has been converted into five storeys; the first floor is half-way underground and the fifth floor is made up of the attic.

The firm repaired the building in July of this year; the job was so well done that on July 13, the second storey collapsed on top of the sleeping tenants and pulled down those on the third storey along with it. I myself saw a woman with a child in her arms scrambling out of the ruins; in another place a man with his head cov-

ered with blood pushed his way free. I couldn't stay to see what else happened as I was going to work.

The food sold in the barracks is nauseating; a person who has lived in a big town or has worked in a factory and had meals at home is against going into the barracks' canteen; quite often one prefers to go hungry rather than eat in the place. Apart from this the food is very expensive.

Zakhar Morozov makes a profit of 25 to 30 per cent on the food sold. Taking two kopeks out of every ruble for the accommodation, Morozov makes each year, out of the men's artel alone, 2,300 rubles; then for food one ruble a month from every person, or 9,600 rubles a year, so that altogether he has an annual income from the men's artel of nearly 12,000 rubles.

In 1899, when the men in this artel protested at the bad quality of the food, demanding an improvement and that the provisions be bought in another shop than the firm's, the owner shouted at them, "I'll close down the barracks, you can go and get private lodgings."

Two men are in charge of the catering; they were elected at some time or other to this post but continue to hold on to their positions as managers, although the workers dislike them intensely. Not long ago three workers complained about one of the managers; the three of them were promptly dismissed.

* * *

The question of workers' flats in Orekhovo-Zuyevo. Who is not aware that the question of workers' homes in the big towns is of great importance? If wages are high in the district, the housing problem breeds a variety of evils: suffering, ill-health, congestion, and the absence of the decencies of human life.

And, as if to spite the worker, the higher the rent, the more he has to pay for each square foot of space, the worse are the conditions in the room. No conveniences of any kind for the comfort of the tenant; no attention paid to anything except how much profit can be got out of each inch of floor-space.

The population in our area has grown and continues to grow very fast, but there were no decent homes for the workers and there are still none. Although many houses are being built each year they are being put up very quickly—jerry-built out of anything at hand and anyhow.

Everything hangs literally on a nail; one furnace, or a small iron stove, is provided to heat 14 or 15 rooms; the heat is distributed through a sheet-metal pipe leading to all the rooms. Such a heating system can't possibly keep the rooms warm, so they are dry only in summer; in winter, clothes are spoiled by damp, their wearers never feel dry for weeks at a time and suffer constantly from headaches.

The rooms are partitioned off from one another by the thinnest of boards, which more often than not are made out of broken casks and boxes, and put up in such a way that there is space enough between the boards to push a finger through into the next room; here and there the holes are even bigger.

Very few rooms have wallpaper; where it is to be seen the worker had bought it and put it up himself. Most of the windows have curtains in an effort to brighten up the rooms. Some rooms look quite attractive, but they are few and far between.

The women have no time to make their rooms more comfortable because they work no less hours in the factories than their husbands.

According to the owner of these houses, the reason why the partition is not built flush with the ceiling, is

that to do so would be unhygienic and prevent an even distribution of air and heat throughout the rooms. Bearing all this in mind it can be said truthfully that there is hardly one room in the whole of Zuyevo with several thousands of population where two or three people engaged in conversation can't be heard in the next rooms.

And this curbs any organizational and propaganda activity. It is impossible for five or six people to have a meeting in a room because of its size and layout.

Rents of the flats keep rising from year to year causing considerable discontent among the workers who are always approaching their employers for more money to meet the higher rents. In one factory the owner pays one ruble fifty kopeks rent-money to each worker every month, and in another place two rubles monthly is paid. The concession of two rubles is the result of a persistent demand by the workers in this factory who forced the owner to grant it.

Those who live in flats provided by the employer receive no rent allowance. A worker who lives in private lodging and who receives two rubles' rent allowance, with one ruble fifty kopeks from his wife, has to add a good bit to it to pay the rent. And if both man and wife work with a boss who pays only one ruble fifty kopeks a month, this is very little, indeed, because there are few flats under three rubles fifty kopeks; there are more at four rubles fifty kopeks, and many dearer still.

This is why everyone dreams about moving into his employer's houses especially because the privately-owned flats are always a good distance from the workplaces.

I shall now go on to another aspect of the housing problem. How, exactly, do the employers see this question? Do they interfere in the matter? What form of

action do they take and how do the workers themselves react to accommodation in the employers' houses?

It is common knowledge that for a long time the owners have looked upon our brother, the worker, as a kind of half animal (and this is how matters stand even today as far as workers employed by building contractors are concerned—carpenters, bricklayers, bridge-builders, roadmen, carters; workers in the brickworks, railway workers, navvies, etc., etc.), and this is why their rooms are so foul, cramped and dirty.

There are other, even older, barracks in Orekhovo-Zuyevo; they look pitiful in contrast with the new buildings, and terrible to live in. But they are not pulled down just the same because the owners are still trying to crowd into them many single men from the artels. These are the worst barracks of all; they are half brick and half wood.

Now there are very many barracks constructed to the last word in technical and engineering science. Of course, in building these the owners are looking to their own personal interests. It is clear that without these barracks the rents would rise several times over and the workers would spend a lot of time going to and from work (more than 20,000 workers, if not more, live in barracks).

And when rents are raised the rent allowance has to go up too. Taking the lowest figures for the number of workers at 12,000 to 13,000, each receiving two rubles, that is 25,000 rubles a month—a very impressive sum over the year for employers to hand out! So that, having built the barracks the owners free themselves from any new expenditure; the barracks are well and solidly built and will last for a hundred years.

That's the position regarding these model barracks. We can say of them that they are quite good for the factory and mill workers. (We know, of course, that a

worker from the south or from Petersburg would find them not only uncomfortable but hateful and, well, just "barracks.")

The barracks are fitted with an internal system of clean running water; the rooms and corridors are plastered and painted a light colour, the room windows are broad and more than seven feet high, the rooms and corridors are well heated by steam radiators, there is a constant supply of boiling water and there are good wooden beds, etc.

So in the sense of hygiene it seems that everything has been done to satisfy the worker's needs. But there's more than one fly in the ointment.

First of all the rooms appear to be all right for space (nearly 21 ft. in length, about 12 ft. broad and 14 ft. high). But they have to accommodate not one family but three. The families divide the room in the following way.

Two families have their beds along each wall and the third one arranges itself on the *polati* (a broad suspended sleeping-berth in the old Russian style.—*Tr.*). The *polati* is big, a man can stand upright on it without hitting his head on the ceiling, and it looks like a room floating in space.

Down below, the other two families divide the room lengthwise, each keeping to their own half. And this is how not one thousand but more than ten thousand people live.

Such conditions naturally give rise to much discomfort and trouble, the neighbours in one room often squabbling and even coming to blows. It can happen that a member of one family is a bit light-fingered and can make life very unpleasant for the neighbours.

Secondly, there are the watchful eyes of the owner's and police spies (open and concealed, some of the gendarmes' spies live in the barracks), noting the workers'

movements, because the management like to be kept informed of what hours their employees keep and what they do with their spare time. Home from work everyone is expected to lie down and sleep, and a watch is kept to see that they do.

Thirdly, the workers are strictly forbidden to collect in groups in the corridors, passages, rooms and even in the lavatories, and to carry on discussions of any kind, although perhaps they may be talking only in whispers. If fault can't be found with them on account of noise it can be found on the general grounds of maintaining public order.

Fourthly, it is against the rules to read a newspaper or book aloud even in one's own room to people who cannot read.

Fifthly, no games of any kind are allowed; you must first ask your neighbours' permission before you can even smoke in your own room. It is also forbidden to meet a friend in the evening or to loiter either outside or inside the building.

And yet in spite of these oppressive regulations and police coercion the place has a positive attraction for people. The reason is plain, for, you see, the privately-owned flats are many times worse, and are dearer to boot. It is understandable why people in private lodgings wish for accommodation in the employer's houses and are envious of those who are fixed up there already.

In building these new houses the employers undermined the plans of the private landlords in Zuyevo; even if any of them were inclined to put up new brick dwellings they would hesitate to do so for fear that the employers would construct several more, housing more than a thousand in each, and, of course, leaving the landlords' houses empty.

This fear keeps them from building at all and if they do, it is to erect the type of house I've described above.

Orekhovo-Zuyevo workers

(*Iskra*, No. 8, September, 1901.)

* * *

Orekhovo-Zuyevo. We have received this letter: In view of the fact that the *Iskra* is widely circulated in Orekhovo-Zuyevo and that we have no means of informing comrades by word of mouth we request you to publish a warning about the following persons:

M. Agapov (apprentice). Short build, pock-marked, thick lips, has several hairy warts on his face, very garrulous and inclined to dribble at the mouth when talking, age 35, blond, an Old Believer missionary, employed by the gendarmes, spends a lot of time in the company of Orthodox Church priest Nikolayev, in Orekhovo.

I. S. Sapov. Employed as doorman in the meat department of a company food shop, dark, forbidding appearance, crafty type, has a deep voice and speaks abruptly, average height.

V. P. Mazurin. Constantly talking in the works' lavatories about socialism and oppression, and immediately reports anyone who responds, height below average, nasal voice, feeble appearance.

We also warn workers in Vladimir-on-Klyazma that Dmitry Nitkin (see No. 6 of the *Iskra*) is now serving as a policeman in Vladimir.

There is a big demand here for the *Iskra*; no matter how many come, every copy is circulated. Thanks to the *Iskra* there is a big uplift in the militancy of the work-

ers. The article on the peasant question in No. 3 issue was widely discussed; there is still a demand for this issue. Informal meetings of workers express the hope that the *Iskra* will publish more articles on this theme.

Many opinions are ventilated on the clashes between the workers and the police and soldiers in Petersburg. These herald only the beginning of such struggles, so that workers here in Orekhovo-Zuyevo are not mistaken when they say that more battles like these are inevitable in the future, but they will be more bloody and that one cannot fight guns with bare fists.

Ivanovo-Voznesensk. Just now there is a move by the employers against workers who are well dressed; evidently this is a sign of intelligence! Every employer has given a confidential order to his manager not to take on workers before looking them over from head to feet. And if the applicant's clothes look respectable throw him out of the factory. So, like it or not, one has to look like a tramp to get a job.

But if the employers discriminate against men in this regard, they put no such obstacles in the way of women seeking work; the reason is, of course, that women so far suffer everything in silence. In Bogorodsk, Zakhar Morozov gives preference to workers from Ryazan because they are more backward.

The police are paying closer attention to the workers. Not long ago the doorman at a factory barracks searched a worker who came to get some information. Who gave him the right to do this? Derbenyov, Mayor of Ivanovo, works his employees to the point of exhaustion with overtime which is often prolonged the whole night through. In the Burilin works on pay-day the workers are cheated wholesale.

Bogorodsk. The Glukhov factory in Bogorodsk employs 13,000 workers and is one of the biggest industrial concerns in Russia, with the reputation in official circles of being a well organized workplace and a model of praiseworthy solicitude for the workers' welfare on the part of the owners.

Correspondence in No. 8 issue of the *Iskra* acquainted the readers with one side of the life of the Bogorodsk workers—the housing conditions. Now we will tell you, from information received from local comrades, about labour conditions in the Glukhov factory.

The sanitary conditions are a scandal, especially in the dye-shop; there is always danger to life and limb because of the slovenly construction of the building and the lack of repair. The ceiling has begun to collapse; the floor boards are of unplaned wood and are not even nailed down. There are gaps an inch wide between the boards (made purposely to let spilled dye flow through).

The constant seepage of the dye causes suffocating fumes to rise from beneath the floor boards into the dye-shop. Ventilation is bad and the walls and ceiling are mildewed.

There is impenetrable dust everywhere, writes our correspondent.

All this is taking place not in some outlandish spot, but only some dozens of miles from Moscow, in the Moscow province actually, which the government takes to its bosom as a cherished place, to be given "special care and protection." As you see, in "protecting" the province, let alone the "special care," they forget to protect the lives and health of the workers.

There is a three-shift system operating in the Glukhov works; each worker has to do twelve hours one day and six the following day. The weavers' wages equal 14 to 18 rubles a month, what with heavy fines, and rotten warp and weft (thanks to which, writes our correspond-

ent, the workers' teeth begin to decay after a month in the place).

The wages of other workers do not rise above 28 to 30 rubles (the knurling-machine operators). The dyers get 45 to 55 kopeks a day.

During the winter period (i.e., from October 1), the weavers' wages are reduced to 12 and 14 rubles because of the poor-quality cotton from the town of Kokand. Fines are more frequent at this time, as much as two rubles. Dismissals before the end of the hiring period take place more frequently; new ways are found to squeeze more out of the workers.

There is a fine of 20 kopeks for being five minutes late, while the owners put the machines on half-an-hour earlier and stop them half-an-hour later than the working day.

But if the millionaire Zakhar Morozov is not ashamed to use thieving methods to wring more profit out of the workers it is because he looks on them as serfs. "Our master has a terrible love for brandishing the whip and to this day has not abandoned his barbarian habit."

We fear that having this "terrible love," Mr. Zakhar Morozov will not give up his "habit" unless the workers give him a sound whipping; sometimes one wonders why the workers have not used this weapon before, a weapon adopted more than once by the feudal serfs against their landlord tormentors to compel them to relinquish their "love" of the whip.

On July 18, Morozov met four workers returning from town; one of them had a bottle of vodka sticking out of his pocket; they had been to the town bath-house. Suddenly Morozov swooped down on them like a hawk, lashing out with his whip right and left as he shouted, "Why do I have to chase after you? You spend all your money in town and not in my shop!" Then he sent them off to the factory guardroom.

So Zakhar Morozov's workers are *obliged* to spend their wages in Morozov's store and anyone breaking this rule can be arrested. Do the factory inspectors know about this? Or are they waiting for the occasion when the Glukhov workers will smash up the Morozov store? It would not be surprising if these "patriarchal" ways of doing things led to the same patriarchal results as has happened already in many places.

Let's continue the story, however, of the "scourger," Mr. Morozov. He often walks round the mill between the looms with his whip thrust inside his top boots; if he sees a weaver freeing the spool he gets furious, gives the weaver a cut with the whip, imposes a fine and throws the unfortunate man out of the mill.

In 1899, one weaver whom Morozov hit with the whip turned out to be no fool and took Morozov to court over it. The case dragged through three trials and finally Morozov, sighing heavily, said, "I could have made a golden weaver with the money I've spent on these trials."

The whip is also in use among other slave drivers of the Morozov school. Apparently the disorders in Yekaterinoslav and Count Ribopyer's estate were the result of the savagery of similar slave drivers; it would be as well for the money-bags in Moscow to remember that this method of maintaining law and order can be a boomerang.

In the factory hospital it's "a living death without recovery." No wonder. They feed the patients on sauerkraut, and the sourer the better.

About the workers our correspondent writes: They are not afraid to fight—especially the youth; the pity is that they protest individually, demanding their discharge which is quite often refused.

We have some libraries here, and naturally there is a longing for something interesting to read. So off some-

body goes to get a book; see, he gets a story of some kind, but he doesn't seem to be pleased with it. They haven't even got Dostoyevsky, let alone such authors as Shelgunov and Pisarev.

A worker once asked for Darwin but they just looked at him with their mouths open. Preference is given to books aimed at confusing the workers' minds by filling their heads with rubbish; the young workers will not read books on religion and morality—instinctively they sense their stupefying and harmful effect.

We have no secret library as yet, so there is no way to satisfy the undoubted desire for knowledge.

(*Iskra*, No. 9, October, 1901.)

TO THE DEFENCE OF THE WORKERS OF IVANOVO-VOZNESENSK[1]

Where is the justice here?
Why put us to shame?
If heaven should fall asunder,
Are we to blame?

(*From a factory poem*)

Our brother the worker has, indeed, a hard life in the factories and mills; so many have to endure such a variety of exploitation, affliction and intimidation; persecution abounds all around the worker, everywhere the employers are squeezing out his last drop of energy, im-

[1] The story behind the appearance of this article by I. V. Babushkin, whose literary ability was first noted and highly appreciated by V. I. Lenin, is related in a pamphlet written by N. K. Krupskaya, *Lenin as Editor and Organizer of the Party Press*:

"Vladimir Ilyich wanted not only letters from workers; he encouraged them to write articles for the *Iskra*. On the instructions of Vladimir Ilyich I wrote to Babushkin (we knew him quite well: he studied in my group in the Sunday evening school and at the

posing fines, and poor wages—and that's by far not all they do to us.

And though this has gone on since factories were first built we cannot get used to it, so we wage a struggle against these evils and hope to emerge victorious from the battle.

The capitalist masters plunder the workers with great skill but worse still is the persecution of the government.

Then a motley crew of long-haired priests try to impress on us the obedience of slaves, and like hypocrites reproach us for drunkenness and similar vices. We, of course, have been accustomed to this for a long time and know how to value it; after all, as the Russian saying has it: "The dogs bark but the caravan goes on."

All the same it is galling when the best journals in Russia take up arms against us, the working people. "Where is the justice here?"

It looks as if not only the capitalists and the government but every liberal journal, like the *Russian Wealth*, and in the final analysis, Mr. Dadonov, have no love for us? There is no need to excuse the question mark.

We do not forget but remember very well the words of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*: "The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself."

The *Russian Wealth* publishes an article by Mr. Dadonov entitled, "The Russian Manchester" (December,

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same time was a student in the circle of which Vladimir Ilyich was the tutor): 'We have a request to make of you. Go to the library and get the *Russian Wealth*, beginning with December of last year. A certain Dadonov has written a disgraceful article in it about Ivanovo-Voznesensk, trying to portray the workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk as alien to all sense of solidarity, as people without hope or purpose. Shesternin refuted Dadonov in the same journal. Dadonov wrote another and even more disgraceful article and the *Rus-*

1900), in which Mr. Dadonov accuses us of drunkenness, indifference to knowledge, etc., etc. These are very serious charges and cannot be left unanswered.

Of course, if this had been some years ago, we would not have had the possibility of replying, because the same *Russian Wealth* would not have accepted an opposite point of view from a worker, the less so as he would have written it. But those times have passed, so we will try to throw the charges back in the teeth of those who made them.

Here it is worth recalling an answer given by a woman-teacher to a student in one of the evening classes. We had been discussing the meaning of the word "Liberal"; in answering the question the teacher, to show the good qualities in the Liberal personality, placed these on a rather high plane.

She explained that they were educated people, humane, with a liking for order and complete freedom, and having many other good qualities. Along with the other students I was listening to this recital, when I remembered suddenly that I had read in a newspaper how the

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sian Wealth then announced that discussion on this question was closed. Read these articles (if necessary buy the copies you need at our expense), and write an article or notes about them (I had written in the letter 'notes.' Vladimir Ilyich, looking it over, changed it to 'an *article* or notes'), and try to get in as much factual information as you can. It is very important that it be published in the *Iskra* or the *Dawn* (Vladimir Ilyich inserted 'or the *Dawn*,' because he wished to see an article written by a worker in this bigger scientific journal), exposing this rubbish from the point of view of a *worker* (Ilyich underlined the word 'worker' three times) who is closely acquainted with life in Ivanovo-Voznesensk." The refutation was written by Babushkin and developed into a whole pamphlet which was printed as a supplement to No. 9 issue of the *Iskra* in October, 1901, under the heading of *To the Defence of the Workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk* and signed, "A Worker on Behalf of the Workers."—*Ed.*

Liberals very often (perhaps, all the time?) opposed the Socialists abroad.

For a long time afterwards I could not reconcile these two ideas; all the good qualities on the one hand and on the other they opposed us, who were striving for the happiness of all. But that's by the way.

Let's try to reply to Mr. Dadonov and as far as possible justify our conduct.

Mr. Dadonov says that "the main items of expenditure are clothes and vodka, and on these two things alone they spend between 30 and 70 rubles a year," and that this is done by "workers who are earning from 100 to 200 rubles a year."

This means that workers receiving 100 rubles yearly in wages spend 60 rubles on clothes and vodka, i.e., during the year a worker spends every month on provisions, bread, tea, rent, tobacco, baths, laundry, and in addition sends some money to his folks in the village, three rubles 33 kopeks! Oh! What nonsense you write, Mr. Dadonov!

Supposing a worker spends 30 rubles a year on vodka; it means he would buy five bottles every month. So it appears, Mr. Dadonov, that a worker who lives on bread, potatoes and buckwheat, drinks every day less than one hundredth part of a gallon. And you have the nerve to call us "drunkards"! Haven't you overstepped yourself?

It's impossible for a worker to spend a ruble on drink every Sunday: that would be 52 rubles a year, and this does not include the other free days like annual holidays. True, more vodka is consumed during the holidays than at other times, so this accounts for a large part of the money spent on drink, and if a worker does allow himself to have one over the eight at Easter or Christmas, it is presumptuous to conclude from this that we are all "drunkards."

It should also be remembered that when a worker, who lives only on bread, tea and potatoes, drinks a drop of spirits, it is enough to knock him dizzy, particularly if he is not doing healthy physical labour.

Mr. Dadonov contends that drink has become a habit among workers. He arrives at this view on the basis of data supplied by a temperance society.

Of course, we workers know very well what these temperance societies represent and what they will continue to represent, because of their official status under a new system, e.g., when the tsar would be a spirit merchant and Minister Witte a publican, it is enough to recall the expulsion of Count Tolstoi from among the honorary members of the Moscow Temperance Society.

Please, forgive me, you gentlemen of culture, but one does not have to be a prophet to declare that it was not them who were fated to be the leaders of these associations, but the various officials and priests who took their places. The *Iskra* hopes, at an early date, to acquaint our readers with one of these temperance associations which is steadily eradicating drunkenness.

It is quite true, Mr. Dadonov, that "carousing" goes on, and not only in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, but in Petersburg, in Moscow, in southern Russia, and indeed, throughout the whole country.

And this is an evil against which every thinking worker is fighting, but we cannot agree that it is "one of the worst evils of factory life." If a weaver who has just started work in a new job invites ten to fifteen fellow workers to have a drink and buys a couple of bottles of vodka for the purpose, it is ludicrous to say that he is doing this to make them drunk, and not just have one after work to celebrate his new employment.

This is not something that goes on every day in the factories, indeed, such "carousals" may occur only a few times a year.

In truth, "the devil is not as black as he is painted" by the temperance society and by Mr. Dadonov.

Here we take the liberty of putting the question: why are these "carousals" said to be "drunkenness, which, to some extent, has become a habit," or "one of the worst evils of factory life," when among enlightened personalities, even among the men of letters, there are the various jubilees, dinners, and celebrations where wine and vodka are drunk certainly not less per head than in any of the "carousals," why, we ask, are these not described, too, as "drunkenness, which, to some extent, has become a habit," eh, Mr. Dadonov?

Why, then, can their highnesses "drink a glass to the health" of someone, then "propose a toast," then "reply to a toast," then "toast the Prince," and so on without end, until from the numerous "healths," "glasses" and "toasts" everyone is dead drunk? why, Mr. Dadonov, is this not condemned as "drunkenness, which, to some extent, has become a habit," or as "one of the worst evils" of the life of the upper and fashionable classes?

Take, for example, Minister Sipyagin, who, on a tour this summer, was invited to dinner everywhere he went and was always as drunk as a lord.

This is true, because he was seen by workers when he came out after dinner given by Morozov; he was so drunk he could hardly stand.

And, really, Mr. Dadonov, is the above not "drunkenness en masse"? We repeat, why are our "carousals" "drunkenness, which, to some extent, has become a habit," and all the others described above are not? We know the answer and we will not keep quiet about it.

The difference lies in this, Mr. Dadonov, that you literary people, and more so, the many "excellencies" and "highnesses," and other "abstainers," drink in good restaurants, clubs, flats, and palaces, while we poor people have to drink in the courtyards, literally "behind

the gate," or at best, in summer, in the fields on the meagre grass and with a similarly meagre snack.

Once we have drunk, we cannot boast of good form, because we are pale and weak.

Did you see the drunken Mr. Sipyagin? When he is sober he looks exactly like a copper pot and when drunk his complexion is redder still (in short, he would be well advised to drink less if he does not want to burn himself out with alcohol like the late Governor of Yekaterinoslav, General Keller).

But even if we do drink in the courtyards, this does not give you the right to call us drunkards, and the others abstainers. Pick up a newspaper and in every issue there's one and the same thing: flashy parties, drinking bouts, someone being toasted, and so on.

Some of these people spend their lives with a glass in their hand, yet the pundits try to be charitable in describing these illustrious drinking-parties. Ah, you literary gentlemen, what could be more shameful than this?

Willy-nilly the questions arise: where are temperance societies? Where is Mr. Dadonov? Where are his powers of observation when all this is going on? Why doesn't he say, "and almost nothing came out of their education"? And why are they silent? It's very simple: they are afraid of the consequences, so they keep quiet about all this drunkenness.

It's another matter as far as the workers are concerned; you can say anything you like about them. The worker's hands are tied, so you can go up to him and spit in his face. That's how the temperance societies, and Mr. Dadonov with them, attack the workers.

That's enough about drink, but we are not finished with Mr. Dadonov yet.

Regarding the point he makes that one often meets workers here wearing nankeen trousers, we see nothing particular in this and certainly nothing wrong. In any

case, what's strange about the fact that a worker living in town first wears the same clothes he wore in the village, and then buys a town suit? Does Mr. Dadonov really think that town clothes are a luxury for peasants and that the people should always wear village clothes?

If the answer is yes, it means for one thing to express a hope that the gloomy log-hut should remain an eternal feature of the village. In the present case I do not accuse Mr. Dadonov of ridiculing dress, but stress only that which is the best of the two possibilities.

A long time ago our well-respected Mr. Plekhanov wrote about workers (*The Russian Worker in the Revolutionary Movement*) having the advantage over the intelligentsia in dress (I regret that I don't have the book here, so I can't quote the celebrated writer's own words). In any case a little pride in one's appearance is preferable to slovenliness.

The question of housing accommodation is truly too bad to be either praised or defended, not only in the town we are discussing but in the whole of Russia. And the workers who live in these overcrowded conditions have got so used to them that they arouse feelings of exasperation among more enlightened workers. In fact, they are so accustomed to these conditions that they prefer to live that way than only two or three to a room.

A common saying is that there's more fun when the room is crowded, for to sit two or three to one room is like being in prison.

This is a result of decades of living in such conditions; besides, all that those coming from the countryside are worried about at first is to send home a miserable few rubles every month, and they are prepared to put up with worse on this account.

Nurtured in conditions like these the mass of people cannot bear solitude; they look on it as a kind of punishment.

It is similar to what Melshin wrote in his splendid book *The Social Outcast*, when he described how an educated person found life in a common cells intolerable and considered it a hell from which he could be saved only by solitary confinement.

But for an uneducated person, on the contrary, a room to himself would be an equal torture, whereas the communal barracks suits him fine.

In Ivanovo-Voznesensk all self-respecting workers try to get a room to themselves and if most of them do live in dormitories there are others who live on their own, or at best two families to one room; this is why the observant Mr. Dadonov would see more than one bed in a single room.

Indeed, Mr. Dadonov has extraordinary powers of observation. He is certainly not like the hero in Krylov's fable who visited a Zoo and saw everything but the elephant! Oh, no! Mr. Dadonov had hardly arrived in Ivanovo-Voznesensk to see the factories than he noticed, in addition to other things, the valley in which all the factories are situated. There's Mr. Dadonov's powers of observation for you!

He circled round and observed many things until, for a while, he stood facing the valley while going round in circles for all the world like a windmill; up and down; up and down; up and down.

Thus he observed the employers and noted the management and the local economy, etc., etc. But we are not so much concerned about these as with what he said regarding us, the workers.

Still circling round he saw that "drunkenness, to some extent, has become a habit"; circling still more he sees that the workers all sleep together, so close against each other that they are not unlike sardines in a tin. They even try to sleep so that someone's feet are up against someone else's face!

Round he goes; this time he sees that the workers (all of them) have not the slightest desire to read and still less inclination towards education; another turn of the "windmill"; what does he see now? "They drink a couple of pints of vodka." And still more: "the police inspector is investigating some case"; and all that came out of this "case" was a torn vest!

Round he goes; now he sees an empty theatre there, here a round-dance, over there people are loitering; not a book to be seen anywhere, so let's go round a little more. Now he sees a railway station and in the distance—the *Russian Wealth.*

And though his eyes were sharp there was one thing Mr. Dadonov did not notice and did not inscribe on the pages of the *Russian Wealth.* We admit that the picture is not complete; nevertheless, there are certain things which we justifiably expected from the observant Mr. Dadonov. Why did he not repeat the platitude that "there is no doubt that the workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk are very lazy"? Perhaps Mr. Dadonov will amplify this assertion. Meantime we shall answer his main charge that we are "extremely indifferent to learning."

Mr. Dadonov already received a reply to his article, from Mr. Shesternin, who pointed out to the observant Mr. Dadonov that he was using wrong figures, i.e., "he caught a sprat instead of a whale," to say nothing of the mistakes he made in the opposite sense, too.

In speaking about the number of readers in the library, he says:

"Readers in the age group of 20 to 30 years make up 23 per cent of the total."

We don't know where he dug up these figures, but it is not vital to our argument. But here's what can be read in the report of the temperance society which throws light on just that period which Mr. Dadonov writes about.

The distribution of readers according to age groups can be seen in the following table:

Age group:	Under 15 years:	159 persons		
„	15 to 20 „	818	„	
„	20 to 25 „	240	„	(16.41 per cent)
„	25 to 30 „	160	„	(10.91 per cent)
„	30 to 40 „	54	„	—
„	40 to 50 „	27	„	—
„	over 50 „	8	„	—

This shows not 23 per cent, but 27 per cent. And how many of the readers are not workers can be seen from the following figures:

Factory workers	1,155	
Artisans	108	
Traders	27	8 per cent
Various professions	95	
No occupation	81	
Total	1,466 readers	

This also shows very well who are reading the books, and if we compare the number of readers with the number of books available, it will be clear why many of the readers are not regulars.

Number of readers	1,466	
Number of books	1,496	
Books taken out in 14 months	14,211	(first place—Gogol)

We have to admit that the workers are reading some very bad literature; we can't agree that this is because they lack taste, but because good books are not available.

If Mr. Dadonov were to blame the peasants for eating grass instead of bread this would be analogous to the charges he makes against the workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk.

Mr. Dadonov, you reproach the workers for being indifferent to learning, but what have you done to change this indifference? *Nothing!* You take workers to task for

confusing the *zemstvo*[1] with the police, but what have you ever written good about the *zemstvo? Nothing!*

What would a worker who was educated in a village school or in the parish church school learn there about the *zemstvo? Nothing!*

If a popular pamphlet were to be written on the *zemstvo* and its functions, would it be available in the libraries of the temperance society or the factory library? *No!*

Would the best books, written by popular authors, and from which the intelligentsia acquire their knowledge, be available to workers at the libraries you mention? *No!* Will the books that can be borrowed from these libraries by workers give them any real knowledge? *No!*

Will the books in the above-mentioned five libraries have the slightest effect on the mental development of the worker? *No!* Have the workers got access to the best (public) library you write about? *No!*

And *No!* without end. No! No! No! Nothing! Nothing! Nothing! So we may draw the conclusion that to count from ten downwards you will still get nothing! Mr. Dadonov himself has demonstrated this.

Was it worth-while to make all that fuss about such nonsense? Hasn't everything possible been done to dissuade workers from using the libraries that are frequented by the foremen, the office staff and the like?

And if a worker becomes educated and independent, and acquires personal dignity, will this be safe for him? Are not our libraries really places often used to make secret observations on the workers' reliability?

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[1] *Zemstvo*—the local authority in Russia prior to the 1917 Revolution. Their powers were limited to exclusively local affairs concerning the rural population (laying and repair of roads, building and maintenance of schools, hospitals, etc.). Liberals from among the landlords took a prominent part in the work of these local councils.—*Tr.*

As far as the public library is concerned there is a basis for saying that in this respect it is not as innocent as a lamb. Hasn't everything been done in the public libraries in order as far as possible to cripple man's nature? Have Messrs. Komarovs not taken, and are they still not taking, a lot of trouble in this direction?

It is true they were permitted to do so. But was the *Russian Wealth* also permitted? We doubt it.

But the main reason why workers don't use the libraries is partly the small number of books available and the inferior quality of those that are on the shelves, and also the real difficulty in finding the book you want from such a poor selection; if the readers don't go often to the library—the blame for this nearly always lies in the library itself.

We have already cited the figures in the report mentioned above; there are 1,466 readers and 1,496 volumes or 1,074 titles—what does this mean? It means that if every reader took out a book, not more than two per cent of the books would be left in the library; in other words the library would be bankrupt.

This is why anyone wanting a book from the library has to be satisfied with any kind of trash.

Here's something else the report says: books on religion and morality are 20 per cent of the total books available, but only 10 per cent of the readers take them out, whereas, fiction, which comprises 60 per cent of the library's stock, is borrowed by 66 per cent of the readers. This shows better than anything else where the greatest and unsatisfied demand is.

It's sticking out a mile that Mr. Dadonov does not wish to count as readers the people who visit the library for some time and then stop going because it is impossible to get a book.

Further. Mr. Dadonov's assertion that in the whole district of 20,000 inhabitants not one book is to be found in

any house is such a glaring and palpable lie that there is no need to say anything more about it.

The workers always have their own secret libraries, where the books may be few, but at least they are always out and being read. And it is just this *serious reader* who seldom goes to the libraries under discussion, first of all, for fear of being singled out and, secondly, they have lost hope of ever finding there a book worth reading.

In Ivanovo-Voznesensk an intelligent worker very often finds it necessary to pose as a stupid person. Mr. Dadonov does not know, and is not interested in knowing, how the whole of the Vladimir province is protected against knowledge and especially against socialism—don't be afraid of that word, Mr. Dadonov.

There have been cases of people wanting to open a bookshop in Ivanovo-Voznesensk but they were consistently refused permission. Were they refused a permit because there were not enough buyers? There is a bookshop in Orekhovo-Zuyevo, but the sale of good popular books is strictly forbidden and anyone who hopes to buy them comes up against the usual "no," and "nothing."

There are constant complaints from the workers there about the scarcity of books—this is a general complaint. In Shuya (see correspondence in No. 6 issue of the *Iskra*) one worker coming out of the library had gone only a few yards when he was stopped by a policeman, who asked, "What book is that?" After making sure what the book was about and where it came from he returned it to the worker.

If the library stamp had not been on the book, would it have been given back to the worker so quickly? We can be sure that the policeman in question had had his orders to keep the workers under observation.

Then there was the gendarme captain who, at an official interrogation, asked the prisoner rudely, "Why did you take this particular book and not a religious one, say,

about the life of a saint?" And this was said not about some outstanding book, but one from the list approved by the government!

The workers get to know all this afterwards and faint-hearts begin to tremble at the thought of going to the library; they are torn between a desire for reading on the one hand and real fear on the other.

Are you aware, Mr. Dadonov, of the position of a worker when these evil forces act against him?

Let's take again the example of Orekhovo-Zuyevo. There the authorities have confiscated the collected works of Reshotnikov as a proscribed book, and then on that basis destroyed all similar books.

It is said that a worker there can't get a book worth reading out of the library, because, they are told, it is out, but members of the office staff can keep two or three books in their homes for months at a time.

It is often noticed, too, that when a worker asks for a certain book in the factory library, he invariably meets with a refusal: the book is out, whereas, as a matter of fact, it is lying undisturbed on the shelf.

How much care is given to the development of reading among the workers is evident from the regulation inflicting penalties for reading out loud in the barracks even though it is done for the benefit of an illiterate person.

Don't be angry with me, Mr. Dadonov, because I take you outside the Vladimir province—to Bogorodsk. The workers in the Zakhar Morozov factory there are fed on carefully selected drivel and so they won't visit the libraries at any price. If there is none of Dostoyevsky's books to be had, what can one hope to get in these libraries to satisfy one's desire for reading, besides cheap, rubbishy prints and stale, priestly exhortations and quackery?

These, in general, are the ways and means used to meet the intellectual needs of the workers.

From the above it would look as if the authorities did provide some facilities for reading that would allow full scope for the satisfaction of this need: indeed, official recognition is given by the government, the employers, and by various social bodies, to the fact that such a need exists. But that's only one side of it.

Things are not always what they appear to be, because, in fact, when they hear of anyone reading to an illiterate person they fly into a rage, they question and proscribe:

"How dare you read out loud in the barracks? Out with him, let him go to private lodgings!"

"Why don't you think of reading religious books instead of this kind?"

"We haven't such a book. It's out. Who are you, where do you work?"

That's the other side of the picture.

So when we hear someone muttering, "There is an indifference to knowledge," can we describe the person making such a claim as anything but contemptible?

Mr. Dadonov says, "In all the five libraries mentioned there are nearly 8,000 volumes and they are at the disposal of 3,000 readers." There is room for doubting the veracity of Mr. Dadonov, because, according to the temperance society, there are in one library alone, as we saw, 1,466 readers. Why, if we presuppose there is the same number of books in each library (of course, approximately), cannot we also assume that there is the same number of readers in each library as well? If Mr. Dadonov is not telling the truth let it be on his own conscience.

There is one thing clear and manifest: that acceptable books are not to be found in any one of the libraries and if there is only a range of nonsensical books to choose from why should we regret that they are not read? Let those who wish to stupefy themselves read books on re-

ligion or moral philosophy; quite frankly we have no desire to do so.

We have still to say a word about the public library, where Mr. Dadonov saw that the workers "don't consider it worth while to spare 20 kopeks a month out of their wages of 15 to 20 rubles." Please, forgive me, reader, for suggesting that Mr. Dadonov was not like Krylov's hero who did not see the elephant, but recognizing him to be a vigilant and observant person! It is hard for me to admit this, but I bow to necessity!

But really, reader, he never saw the elephant! And here's a piece you never thought of, Mr. Dadonov! What is it? It's this: that one must bring two rubles for reading and there and then leave a deposit of four rubles. Isn't it a wonder how a worker can do it from a small wage when in the winter time he earns eight or nine rubles a month—here a deposit to pay—what a chance—four rubles just to get reading!

We can't afford it, Mr. Dadonov, honest to God, we can't afford it! How can anyone give away half of his wages for books when he hasn't enough bread and cabbage soup to eat?

Well, let's try to put things right. Yes, and to tell you a secret, the public library has its dangers for a worker.

There was once a reader who was not satisfied with the libraries that you mention, Mr. Dadonov, so he went to the public library; he had a list of certain books he wanted to read, five titles in all; so he asks directly:

"Please, I would like to have such and such a book."

"We don't have it."

"Well, such and such." "We don't have that, either."

"And this one?" "Not here, either."

"Let me have Darwin, then."

"Who are you, anyway?"

"A worker."

"Where do you work?"

"What is it to you?"

"Well, where do you live?"—and so on....

Finally after the worker had told them everything, where he lived, where he worked, he still had to leave without a book. After this they searched for him in the factory, but, as it turned out, he had not given his real name!

That's how it goes, Mr. Dadonov! And, perhaps, this is why you were told that the workers here are not interested in the lives of workers of other countries. Of course, that's why! The explanation seems to be quite simple and yet, how much time you spent beating about the bush, quite, quite uselessly!

It is quite clear to us why you were told that there was a lack of interest among our workers about the living conditions of the workers in other countries, and about other questions, too. As Krylov said in his fable: the lion decided to make the wolf a shepherd and when he was asked, "Were the sheep asked their opinion?" he answered, "I forgot about them." You did not ask those most concerned, viz., the workers, their opinion. You seem to have re-established the law of dog eat dog, Mr. Dadonov.

In order to prove that the workers are indifferent to learning and don't want to be bothered reading, it would only be necessary to open a library in Ivanovo-Voznesensk with not less than 25,000 volumes, to be selected, not on the basis of the list drawn up by the government, or what is worse, the library lists of the temperance societies, but of books chosen by the readers themselves.

In addition, no observation of the worker using the library, as if he were some lowly animal; no confiscations of Reshotnikov as a proscribed author—then the worker's desire for knowledge will be clear to all.

Messrs. Dadonovs, who serve the interests of Sipyagin and Co., should not forget that the latter have a bludgeon inscribed, "On the basis of Article 144," etc., which they

are ready to use at any time on the heads of the *Russian Wealth* and other journals, and these papers will not be forgiven their sins by Sipyagin even if they publish articles of the Dadonovs.

Allow us to ask you, Mr. Dadonov, what has been done for us in the way of a newspaper? Is there even one good paper? And if there is, what Ivanovo-Voznesensk worker can afford to subscribe for it? Will a worker who pays the subscription be able to get anything of value out of it? No!

So far there appears to be little hope of getting a real newspaper which would speak conscientiously to the worker, and tell the truth bluntly and without hesitation. Such newspapers as the *Svet* (*The World*) only humiliate and befool the workers; the *Stock Exchange News* tries to prove that the workers are ignorant, but, nevertheless, well paid. (Mr. Nezavisimy received a proper answer from a fitter.)

The *Stock Exchange News* argues like this: their Majesties have only to say the word and the earthly world will immediately fall apart, and like seeds from a watermelon, there will descend a multitude of decrees about relaxing the censorship, and the gentlemen of the editorial boards will graciously stoop to pick them up.

But the same Majesties, making small and unimportant concessions, will continue to suck the blood of the Russian people. At the moment the Russian worker has no chance of developing under the censorship, and therefore willingly turns towards achieving this without the consent of the censor.

So, as soon as any illegal literature appears, no matter where or in what quantities, there is still a big unsatisfied demand; these books are read by the workers, they interest the workers, and they are protected by the workers, although this entails considerable trouble and often danger for the people concerned.

Let Mr. Dadonov find us only something worth reading and we'll find plenty of willing readers for it, and they will be people who are undoubtedly interested in science and learning.

In general, it would be preferable if Messrs. Dadonovs came, not so much to find out what we are reading, but to bring us something good to read. If they don't want to bring books to the workers, let them take them to the peasants, who are ten times more starved spiritually of literature than the factory or mill workers; but the Dadonovs do not want to raise a finger to help even such spiritually hungry people.

We have always had, and still have, far too many detractors, but we seldom meet with sincere people, and it is very gratifying when we do come across one who is anxious to do a lot more regarding our education.

May I be forgiven for asking this question? Do the intellectuals who have but the stamp of education really read very much, i.e., those seen in any provincial town, such as the local police official, the district police chief, the judge, the priest, the landlord, the public officer, the town clerk, and the army officer?

It can be said without any exaggeration that they spend more of their time on cards and drinking than on reading; it appears that they were educated differently from the workers; they have plenty of leisure time as compared with the workers; they don't live in such congested conditions, and in comparison with us, they manage to feed themselves not too badly. Why is this, Mr. Dadonov?

With regard to the theatre—it is a generally known fact that needs no confirmation that the theatres everywhere are well attended only if and when there is a good production well presented, and if the seats are not too dear, and, we might add, if the play can be heard in the cheapest seats which is not always the case.

And if Mr. Dadonov did not see any workers in the theatre, maybe he was looking for them with their sleeves rolled up as they do in, or coming out of, the factory. We are already familiar with Mr. Dadonov's powers of observation!

Let's move on. Here's something else Mr. Dadonov says, "There was not the least sign of the co-operative movement." If he did not see any sign of it we see a whole consumers' society with shops and their own rules. Mr. Shesternin already answered this but we will add something else which Mr. Shesternin did not say.

And it's this: at the present time in Russia any kind of co-operative movement is paralyzed, or if you wish, terrorized.

If workers anywhere took it into their heads to start a co-operative store, and if it was not clear right away that it was purely a capitalist concern, they would, first of all, have to prove their reliability, and if the authorities were not convinced that they were reliable, the rules of the society would not be approved and some members would have had a taste of the whip. While the draft rules were being passed from one office to another, attempts would be made to disperse the members by force.

A very great number of such draft rules have been tendered in Russia, but very few of them were ever confirmed, and in these cases confirmation was granted only because provision had been made in the draft rules for the position of honorary, or obligatory, member of the board being vested in the person of the governor, the factory or mill owner, the factory inspector, or the like. And to think that in such societies there is likely to be any improvement in the position of the workers is just the same as believing that the *zemstvo* chiefs are real guardians of the people's welfare....

A constant desire among workers in the large towns is to open a workers' club, but so far permission has been withheld. Therefore, the worker, of necessity, has had to go into saloons to listen to an organ or an accordion, and the literary gentlemen should not consider this a matter of amusement.

Societies which exist under permit feel themselves constantly under the threat of closure; at meetings, the members speak guardedly, always looking over their shoulders in case some toad or viper is ready to fall on their necks. They are worried all the time about their funds, for fear they may be confiscated and appropriated by the government.

One has only to mention the possibility of the society helping members on strike, and by order of the governor the society's life will come to an untimely end.

Evidently, Mr. Dadonov is not aware of the many cases when workers have drafted rules for a society and these have hardly been signed and submitted for ratification when all the signatories have been arrested, and by administrative decree found themselves in Arkhangelsk, the Vologda or the Vyatka provinces.

Was this done because "there were no signs of any co-operative movement"? We can assure Mr. Dadonov that we can support this statement by facts; it is not in our interest to speak against the co-operative movement.

Only by looking soberly at the facts will it be recognized that, under the present political despotism, co-operation is of less value to the workers than it is to the government. Every active worker, enthusiastic about co-operation, has to choose between beating the air or biding his time.

The co-operative movement, in the present despotic conditions, cannot give as much in ten years as could be won in one year of political freedom; this is why we

engage more in bringing enlightenment to the masses by means of illegal agitation than through the co-operative movement.

Everyone knows what the existing co-operative movement and consumers' stores are like, and what they have become in Russia. Here and there they have acquired the character of purely bourgeois institutions; in other places they have proved to be the best means of making the workers return all their wages to the employer; many of them are just bureaucratic bodies run by officials, and there are others I find difficulty in describing, but where the general idea is: Give us your money, we'll dispose of it!

The theoretical aim of the societies is almost the same everywhere and is expressed in the words of clause one: "The society has been established with the object of providing its members with the necessities of life at the cheapest possible cost," etc.; that, as we have said, is the theoretical aim, in practice, it is quite a different story.

In the first category we can include the stores organized on the share system. (For example, there is such a store at the Putilov works in Petersburg.) It is set up at the beginning on the basis of several shares.

The shareholders quite often are not all workers, and just as soon as the store has got on its feet in a trading sense, the shareholders try to limit the number of shares, or, if this is impossible, to hold the shares in the hands of a smaller number of people. The price of the shares begins to rise so that an ordinary worker can't be a shareholder; true, he even stops thinking about it.

The shareholders draw a good dividend; the customers, if they get anything at all, get it only in a good shop and in a prosperous year. The affairs of the stores

revolve round several persons; the customers just have no powers whatever.

Another case. There are many stores attached to factories and workshops which were opened at the expense of the owners who control the administration and receive all the profit. If workers tried to set up a co-operative store there, they would be thrown out of the factory immediately, and even might make the acquaintance of Messrs. Sipyagins who would not fail to take coercive, administrative measures against them.

These same workers, going to the store to spend their hard-earned money, must look out for themselves just as if they were still in the factory; the factory management is in the store, too, and can put the worker out of the factory in the same way: take what we give you and don't argue! The co-operatives cannot be a weapon of struggle at present; the need is to broaden the economic fight into a political fight.

In the third case, the stores attached to the railways bear everywhere the stamp of officialdom, and though the main income is collected from the workers, a sufficient number of workers cannot get on to the management board, and those who do get on usually knuckle under to the officials.

Fourthly, there are stores where it is hard to distinguish between the board of management and the factory management, in spite of the fact that the former is an elected body (the Bryansk factory). Just imagine a person becoming a member of the store's management, who, in the eyes of the factory management, is undesirable. Such a person is quietly sacked from the factory and is thus deprived of the right not only to be on the store's board, but even to be an ordinary member of the co-operative. And this can happen not only in the stores in question (the Bryansk factory) but in practically any co-operative store.

Fifthly, in Orekhovo-Zuyevo the co-operative stores function on money collected from the members. Anyone who wants to join must fix the sum of money he wants to his credit, say, ten rubles, and pay this sum in advance, only then can he become a member and can purchase not more than the sum of his deposit. And this is apparently the last word in co-operation in Russia.

Here the board is elected, but who are present at the elections? The foremen, office personnel, and others of the factory administration, who are all, in fact, the legal bosses of the store. At the election meetings the workers stand at the back doing nothing but agreeing with the office personnel who, of course, propose their own candidates.

Such in general outline is the system within the co-operative societies, and the unenviable part that may be played by workers who are members. Workers who belong to co-operative societies anywhere in Russia are looked on as sheep to be shorn at every opportunity.

What do workers gain by joining these kind of co-operative or public stores? This is what goes on in any of these shops anywhere in Russia.

The very best and most tender parts of the meat are reserved for the manager's table; next in line are the foremen, the office personnel, the supervisors, and the store managers. But the stringy meat and bones, in fact the toughest part of the meat, is sold to the workers; stale meat—also for the workers; spoiled meat—also for the workers.

Not long ago there was a case in Orekhovo where they palmed off on workers salted meat full of worms. Yes it was "palmed off": whoever ordered two pounds of meat got three pounds, etc. Customers stopped writing orders for meat and so saved themselves; those who had already ordered meat could not refuse to take it.

If any of the customers complained about the poor quality of the goods he found himself in real trouble. At best they took the stuff back and shouted that if he did not want it why did he put in an order?

That's all right if the worker goes off without saying anything, otherwise it's too bad; the number of his book is noted and he is called into the office where more menacing words, such as rebellion, insurrection, strike, prison, Siberia, are showered down upon the refractory worker's head.

It happens that a store manager gets a worker dismissed from his job in the mill or factory for no other reason than that the worker refused to accept bad meat or complained about some malpractice in the store.

Another thing worth mentioning is that the customers have constantly to wait a long time for goods they want. Mistakes are quite common too; the customer will get eight or nine rubles' worth of goods, but finds himself charged twelve to fifteen rubles.

He runs here and there to have it corrected; finally, the error is admitted, but the customer has to wait till the following month when the accounts are cleared. However, if it is a mistake of only a ruble or fifty kopeks instead of five or six rubles the customer, in the majority of cases, thinks it is not worth making a fuss about, particularly, because the store manager might not thank him for pointing out the mistake!

But the main charge that can be levelled at the present co-operative stores is that they practise the exact opposite of the aims laid down in their constitutions, viz.: they sell goods that are sometimes of inferior quality and very often charge prices higher than the private traders.

For instance, in the Bryansk store some goods are 25 per cent to 30 per cent dearer, and it is quite common to see goods 5 per cent to 10 per cent dearer than

in private shops. The co-operative in Ivanovo-Voznesensk does not sell cheaper than the private traders; in fact, the latter often knock 2 per cent to 5 per cent off the price; but this never happens in the co-operative store.

In Orekhovo-Zuyevo meat is more expensive in the consumers' society store than at the private dealers; besides, there is no third quality meat, which means that third quality is sold as second quality.

The general attitude to customers is rude; whoever is higher up gets all the privileges. This is the pass that the noble idea of co-operation has come to here.

While in various places abroad the co-operative movement is a help and support to the working class, here it is still a lash on the worker's back, so it's no wonder that it has not won the sympathy of the workers and that the fruits the workers have gathered so far from the co-operative movement are anything but sweet. Maybe this gives ample reason for Mr. Dadonov to say that the workers are out of sympathy with, and have no inclination to support, the co-operatives.

And that's not all. Our Sipyagins can say that they permit the co-operative societies to exist and that no obstacles are put in their way. They (the Sipyagins) have done everything possible to besmirch the idea of co-operation and have gone even further.

For instance, not long ago one captain of the gendarmes explained that His Excellency the Governor willingly sanctioned the Levitsky co-operative and, indeed, sympathized with it, so the workers need not be afraid of it, no one would be persecuted for joining it.

But Svyatopolk-Mirsky also said, "Why not establish some kind of workers' society here in Yekaterinoslav?" We don't know whether he will now permit the organization of workers' societies. However, we know he is an obliging person.

We could hardly be mistaken if we said that the government took the trouble at the appropriate time to distort the principles of co-operation and smear its noble idea and now, feeling that the organization of workers' societies is inevitable, they are attempting to direct these on to the wrong paths, so that they will encounter failure, and generally become innocuous. This is the idea behind their spurious sympathy.

Therefore, it is necessary to be doubly careful and extremely vigilant in order to be on top of everything all the time. It's hard to say if we will be able fully to cope with the task.

In concluding his article Mr. Dadonov says, "... There comes into the factory, from outside, a craving for enlightenment and culture."

Doesn't Mr. Dadonov think that this craving comes into the factory from the lads on military service? And do the soldiers really send anything in the way of culture into the factory? And if they think so, the gentlemen Dadonovs must also believe it is possible to make silk out of a sow's ear.

I'll give another example. At the moment one of our former fellow workers is on military service; he once witnessed a factory "revolt," indeed, he was more than a witness. He left a few comrades here. Here's what this soldier writes:

"I did not leave the cause behind; I have some people like me here, about ten of them." Aha! it seems that the answer was quite simple after all! It becomes clearer how the soldiers get their knowledge.

Do we need to say that there are quite a few of such people from the factories and mills now on military service who are asking for books, even saying, "Please, use every opportunity to send illegal literature!" That's how much we workers know!

I'll say something more. Workers go out from Ivanovo-Voznesensk who are no less intelligent than Ivan Frolov (Mr. Dadonov knows him), although, maybe, they don't write poetry and are not well known to you.

We still have a number of politically experienced workers in Ivanovo-Voznesensk in spite of the fact that the authorities will not allow "unreliable" persons to come here.

There is even a certain analogy to a university; just as a university graduates and sends out custodians of "culture and enlightenment" to all the corners of the country, so also does Ivanovo-Voznesensk send out through its workers "the light of culture" to all the ends of Russia.

A worker on behalf of workers

(Supplement to No. 9 issue of the *Iskra*, October, 1901.)